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CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining,

BETWEEN

An *English* GENTLEMAN,

AND

A KNIGHT of *Malta*.

CONTAINING

A lively Picture of the Heart of MAN,
his Passions and Sources of Action:

INTERSPERSED with

Real, Curious, and Secret HISTORIES on each
Subject.

The whole design'd a diverting Improvement in that
great Science of Life, *The Knowledge of HUMAN*
NATURE.

*Two Principles in Human Nature reign,
Self-love, to urge, and Reason, to restrain:*

*Self-love, the Spring of Motion, acts the Soul;
Reason's comparing Balance rules the whole.*

*Modes of Self-love the PASSIONS we may call;
'Tis real Good, or seeming, moves them all.*

POPE.

LONDON,

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COPIED FROM THE

MANUSCRIPT OF

THE

RECORDS OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

AND THE

RECORDS OF THE

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Page 74. line 14. for *Sophia* read *Eugenia*. P. 141. l. 29. after *Among others*, add, *my father related to me the following one*. P. 196. l. 23. for *Three per cent.* r. *Three and a half per cent.*

CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

First CONVERSATION.

LACTIFER, led abroad by a laudable curiosity of learning, from his own observations, the different manners of the principal nations of *Europe*, had made a considerable progress in his travels, and was now upon the point of returning home; when, passing through *Holland*, he came to a resolution of making some stay there, thro' the hopes he conceived of finding something in that people more worthy his attention than what he had met with in many others. But take the occasion of his resolution from his own words.

“ I was extremely surpris'd (*says he, in his Memoirs*) “ to find so extravagantly odd a mixture of various people as were in this place: “ Men, who hold all *Europe* in sovereign contempt, complimenting their own country with
 B “ all

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“ all the talents they deny the rest of mankind.
 “ The *English* fare no better among them than
 “ any of their neighbours, but share their ha-
 “ tred in common with all others.”

It was not therefore without reason *Lactifer* imagin'd, that so whimsical a collection of people could not but deserve his attention; accordingly he determin'd to stay at the *Hague* as long as might be necessary to enter thoroughly into the true genius and character of each. The season was inviting, and he seldom fail'd taking, at least once a day, a turn in the walks, to compass his design.

The first turn he took there proved too favourable not to convince him that he had taken the best means to succeed in his purpose. He had not long stept aside to a shady part of the walks to rest himself, when a person in no mean dress, drew near and sat down by him. After some minutes silence the *Hollander* thought to do him a mighty honour in mistaking him for a *Dutchman* and a *Burgher*. No, Sir, says *Lactifer*, I am neither of this city, nor of this country, but a foreigner, whom curiosity induces to stop at every considerable town I pass thro', on purpose to examine it's beauties. It is That then detains you at the *Hague*, sir, replies the *Hollander*. You are in the right, this city merits your curiosity; I believe there are few can match it. Speak frankly, have you seen many to come up to it? I arrived here but yesterday, says *Lactifer*, and am not sufficiently acquainted with the *Hague* to be a judge of it. I have however seen most parts of *Europe*, and have

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have but lately pass'd thro' *French Flanders*, where I have seen several very noble cities, particularly *Lisle*, and I assure you, sir, that for the generality of commonwealths I know few that have a city superior to it, if I except *Venice* and *Genoa*: The town is large and well fortified, the buildings are noble, the streets finely drawn out, the inhabitants numerous and daily increasing, the trade is considerable, the many persons of quality residing there form a constant court, and the wisdom and vigilance of it's magistrates make safety, peace, and plenty reign over it. What more can be wish'd, sir, should the *Hague* —— Here the *Hollander* interrupted him with a loud laugh, which excited compassion. I fancy, sir, says he, you are of *Lisle* yourself, for the weakness of comparing *Lisle* to the *Hague* is not to be borne with in any but a prejudiced man. Why this walk, this very walk you are now in, is worth all *Lisle* put together.

Happily for *Lactifer* a third person came to rest himself by them, on the same bench. His coming put an end to a conversation which grew disagreeable and tedious to him. But the politeness of the last comer soon made amends for the ill breeding of his former companion. 'Twas a gentleman of an agreeable aspect, and a graceful address; he had large animated eyes and his deportment had something extremely preventing in his favour. He was a Knight of *Malta*, who had been sometime at the *Hague*.

He perceived he had interrupted the discourse of *Lactifer* and the *Dutchman*, their silence was a proof of it; he broke it therefore the first,

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by asking them, whether his presence put a stop to their conversation, which, by the spirit he perceived it from far to be carried on with, he had guess'd to be somewhat engaging. No, sir, says *Lactifer*, you only silence a very prejudiced person, and if his partiality was not such as must give offence to every man who loves only to listen to reason in every thing, I would consent to the going on with our discourse, and agree to your being judge of it; as you are acquainted with the *Hague*, you would be a much fitter person than I to decide, whether what this gentleman advances be real or chimerical. But in truth, sir, it is much better for us to say nothing, than to tire you with our talk. The gentleman is prejudiced, and thinks no country worthy to be compared with his own; he is too far gone in this prevention ever to be cured of it, and therefore let us change the topic.

Nothing is more natural to man, says the Knight, than the love of his country. This affection, we see, has been deeply engraven on the hearts of all people. True, says *Lactifer*, the *Romans* divided their homage equally between their gods and their country, the *Grecians* were not behind hand with them in this respect; but we no where find these or those swell'd with contempt for each other, and tho' they did not always agree, their differences were owing to a mistaken jealousy on both sides, arising from consciousness, in each, of their mutual equality of merit. These two great people might have shared reciprocally all the advantages they severally possess'd, and form'd themselves

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selves into two accomplish'd nations, had they kept up a perfect harmony between them, for want of which we may discover an infinity of imperfections in both. You will allow, sir, if this be love for one's country, it is at best but like that of the generality of mothers for their children, who by denying them nothing, render them at length unfit for every thing. You reason very justly, sir, says the Knight, I look upon a nation prepossess'd with its own sufficiency to be in the same error with your learned pedants, whose favorable opinion of themselves suffers them not to consult any one, on the works they communicate to the public. Their writings are for the most part execrable and never beyond a mediocrity, which otherwise might, perhaps, have been excellent, if the advice of some unbiass'd friend had been applied to correct them. We stand in too near a light to ourselves to be competent judges of our own productions, the objects are too confusedly huddled, and the only idea, we can draw from such a chaos, is that which self-love makes us a present of; we almost always deceive ourselves, and thus fall the dupes of our own ambition. This brings me a story to mind which has a good deal of affinity with our present subject.

Lactifer intreated the Knight to do him the favour of relating it, which he readily acquiesced to. But the other gentleman, finding himself in danger to be nonsuited, if he remain'd any longer in their company, took his leave; resolv'd to take refuge in some neighbouring alehouse, where he might console himself over

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a comfortable tankard of *October*. He had no sooner left them than the Knight began the following story.

Valerio and *Felician* were united by the strictest ties of friendship; *Pylades* and *Orestes* were never more intimate. This mutual friendship was of long standing, and seem'd not liable to change. The same temper, the same way of thinking, the same tutor, the same principles, the same religion were so many gordian ties which link'd them together, and I need not tell you that such chains are not easily broken. But unhappily for both, they each of them married, and in a few years after were obliged to separate, for the sake of family peace, without ceasing however to love each other.

Valerio's wife was named *Capricia*, and *Felician* was married to *Prudella*, women of very opposite characters, and yet animated by the same passion. *Prudella* had a great deal of wit and merit, but was excessively proud; *Capricia* had neither, but her ambition had no limits, and her inconstancy no example. Their husbands had not long made their choice before it was attended with repentance; but it was too late. They entertain'd hopes of curing their foibles by repeated applications of reason, but they had no organs for it. They assumed the masters, and gave their wives to understand that being heads of their family they expected to be obey'd; but they learn'd from experience that woman agitated by any one passion is as difficult to govern as a ship borne away by a storm.

So

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So that they were compel'd to give over lecturing.

You may judge, sir, that the children of such mothers could not be very susceptible of any other education than what would agree with their predominant passion. *Capricia* brought hers up in an immoderate love of riches and luxury, which all *Valerio's* philosophy was too weak to combat. All his lectures had not the least effect upon his children, for want of being conform to the corruption which ushers nature into the world.

Felician was more happy. *Prudella*, to speak truth, educated hers in a spirit of pride; yet her principle was that the esteem of men, especially men of merit, was far preferable to riches. *Felician* knew so well how to make an advantageous use of this foible in his wife, that he gave his children a most accomplish'd education.

The whole town talk'd of *Felician's* children with utmost applause; and if *Prudella's* vanity was tickled with it, *Capricia's* pride was piqued with a jealousy that allow'd her no rest. In vain she strove to procure her children some weight with the public, from an ostentatious boasting of their immense wealth and their talents for increasing it; they were put, at best, but upon a level with the ass in the fable, who valued himself upon the rich hoofsing which exposed him. In a word *Capricia's* children had no other partisans than those they bought, by sharing their pleasures with persons of the same taste.

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It was quite otherwise with *Prudella's*. Their company was courted by people of all ranks; and the surest way to public esteem was to be publickly seen of their parties, and intimate with them.

Capricia, stung to the quick with envy, spirited up her children against *Prudella's*; the former would frequently insult the latter: but these made them no other return than an affected disregard, which sufficiently express'd how little they thought them worth any notice. *Valerio* and *Felician* used all their endeavours to nip this rising enmity in the bud; the friends of both tried every means to convince *Capricia* and her children, that it was hurting themselves to inveigh against persons, whom the public had so justly declared worthy public esteem: but they were not to be convinced. *Capricia's* hatred daily encreased, the two friends were obliged to separate, and saw one another for the future only by stealth.

The piece of history I have here given you, sir, says the Knight, appears to me a perfect resemblance of the antipathy we frequently discover between two nations. It is almost always grounded on the regard and esteem the world pays to the one more than the other. Why does the weaker state follow the example of *Capricia*, and not rather do justice to the more powerful, and endeavour to imitate it, by a similitude of manners and policy? Then the monarchy of peace would become universal, the arts and sciences would shine forth in all their lustre, and a noble emulation between both na-

tions

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tions would cement them with a perfect union: and thus become a means of their reciprocally communicating their respective lights to each other, and reaping a mutual advantage from them. In short *Valerio* and *Felician* might publicly enjoy all the fruits of a free correspondence.

Lactifer, after thanking the Knight for the favour of this history, did not forget to express the applause due to his manner of relating it. But, sir, continues he, a man who is curious enough to make a nice application of every delicate stroke in this story, may discover many truths in it which you affect to pass over in silence. For my own part I am at a loss what sentence to pass upon it; it only appears to me too well adapted, not to be the fruit of invention: I fancy, sir, you hardly composed it at *Malta*.

I confess, says the Knight, I have acquired myself a habit of such sort of parables, because I ever look'd upon this manner of reasoning with mankind as the politest and most insinuating; but let us be ingenuous; if we find some few persons, who have sense enough to relish a comparison of this nature, are there many to be met with, who are just enough to themselves to know themselves again in it? Man is now become deaf to all but his passions, and is insensible enough to be blind-folded by them without so much as perceiving that he is so. When the Prophet ask'd *David*, what punishment was due to the owner of a numerous flock who had been cruel enough to force away from

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a poor man the only ewe he possess'd; the monarch was immediately struck with the injustice wrapt in this parable, but was too much intoxicated with his passion for *Bathsheba* to make the right application; the Prophet was obliged to tell him, This is you yourself, who have rob'd *Urias* of the only wife he had. Such a pass men are come to at present, and I see no remedy for their evils; the raging extremity of their distemper makes the subject of their vanity.

Lactifer could not but compliment himself upon his first opinion of the Knight; and he had reason: he found he was not mistaken in him. But this served only to stir up in him a curiosity too strong to be resisted, of knowing more of him. He imagined it would be no easy matter to make a man say much of himself, who had a great share of wit, and whose modesty was depicted in his countenance; however he was resolved to have no recourse to artifice, and therefore freely ask'd, if he might be indulged the pleasure of knowing whom he had the honour to converse with. Alas! sir, says the Knight, you have perhaps entertained too favourable an opinion of me, and if I should disclose myself to you, I may lose your esteem. I have myself follow'd but ill the noble maxims I am full of; I feel the same repugnance as other men to discover my frailties; but I desire to be cured of it, and therefore I will declare them. You will only permit me to conceal my own name, and to veil under borrow'd ones the other persons who have part in this history.

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history. *Lactifer* consented, and the Knight began as follows.

I am a native of *Languedoc*. Some years after my birth, my father, past hopes of more children, was resolved to spare no expence to give me as good an education as he thought me susceptible of. I was scarce ten years old, when he sent me to a friend at *Paris*, who for his sake gladly took upon him the care of me. I had masters appointed me of every kind, and took a pleasure in learning whatever they taught me 'till I had gone through my classic studies. But I no sooner imbibed a little philosophy from the books my tutor put into my hands, than I began to have an utter distaste for many things I was set to learn; dancing in particular was insupportable to me. I could find neither reason nor common sense in it, it appear'd no better to me than a mean mechanic agitation, the invention of little geniuses to set puppets off, and I never could practise it without blushing. Music and painting seem'd to me the only fit amusements for a man of sense, and they indeed are all I have retain'd of the arts I was instructed in.

I applied myself with all the vigour I was master of, to the study of philosophy, and had such a relish for it, that I resolved from that time forward, to make it the darling employment of my life. But alas! the masters to whom I was indebted for so many noble sentiments had neglected giving me the most material lesson. I was not apprized of the imminent danger to which every young man is exposed, who
rushes.

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rushes into the world before he is stock'd with any knowledge of it.

I went to the academy to learn my exercises, where I enter'd into a kind of amicable engagement with several young gentlemen of my own age, who were as assiduous in the pursuit of pleasure as I was indifferent about it. I thought however, that complaisance and good breeding required me to be sometimes of their parties. We often paid visits together, I insensibly accustom'd myself to this thoughtless and effeminate kind of life, the habit of it grew pleasant, and all my philosophy dispersed before I was aware of it.

My companions one day made a party with some ladies to take a jaunt to the wood of *Boulogne*, and invited me to be of it. I agreed to it, but was not long in the wood before I condemn'd my own levity; I was sensible of the danger I was in, yet an unaccountable infatuation persuaded me that I ought not to shun it.

Tho' the country is apt to introduce very great freedoms, there was one young lady in the company of more composure than the rest of the ladies. I did not find her very beautiful, but an agreeable something in her countenance with the sprightliness of her eyes had a strange effect upon me. I drew near her, talk'd to her, and found, she had a fine understanding, with uncommon good breeding.

At first I imagin'd the pleasure I conceived in being near her was only the child of her wit, but we were no sooner joined by one of my companions, than I felt a real pain in sharing
her

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her conversation with another. I left her for a while, when a secret uneasiness took entire possession of my soul; I tried to reflect on the situation I was in, but I was no longer the master of my thoughts. I sought to be alone, fancying I might be better able to reason apart; but all efforts were vain, my imagination presented me with nothing but the young lady; my mind, wholly engross'd by her, repeated continually what she had said to me; and my heart, fill'd with her merits, told me she was lovely.

By this time I had penetrated to the most retired part of the wood, without perceiving it; it was the voice of one of my companions, calling after me, which first made me sensible I had stray'd. I was offended at his interrupting me; I enjoy'd such pleasure in musing, that I could have wish'd to go on thus musing all my life long. However I return'd to the company, who rallied me upon my solitude; but I was so inwardly taken up, that I should have wanted an answer, if one of my companions had not help'd me to one, by asking, if I had been to pore over some mathematical problem. I laid hold of the hint, and brought myself off with a jest on the subject.

The day grew extremely tedious to me; the constraint I was under made me suffer more than I can express. The only delight I could take was in the conversation of the dear object that wounded me; but not being alone with her, I fear'd to say much to her, lest some unguarded expression might divulge the secret passion

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passion I entertain'd for her. Sometimes I wish'd the sun would hasten its career to forward our return to *Paris*, and the next moment dreaded to lose the too ensnaring presence of her I ought to have shun'd. Ah! said I, we shall part but too soon, too soon shall I lose the only company worth enjoying. What injury has she done me, to make me fly her as an enemy? If she is the cause of this inward anguish I endure, she is innocently so. 'Tis her understanding enchants me, it is that beauty alone I admire in her. Where is the crime then? Or why should I avoid a lovely object, whom every man of sense must eagerly pursue?

It was in this flattering manner I contributed to deceive myself; but I did not fully perceive, how far I was lost to myself, 'till I found I was alone in my chamber. No comparison can speak the disquiet I felt, a thousand unconnected thoughts, at a time, distracted me. *Eugenia* (for that is the name I give the young lady in question) *Eugenia*, I say, was present to me in every pleasing form; I saw an infinity of perfections in her, and I thought her superior to the rest of her sex. Oh admirable maid! Oh lovely creature! would I often exclaim, who, who is the happy man destin'd to possess so sweet, so accomplish'd a wife as thee?

I earnestly desired to be that happy man, but the modesty I had remark'd in *Eugenia* condemn'd my weakness; and, persuaded that *Eugenia* could not be affected towards any man so much as I was to her, I blush'd with confusion to think that a woman, and a young one too, should

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should have more virtue than myself. This incensed me with real indignation against myself, and I at length resolved to resist, with all the force I had, a passion, which disquieted me but too much even in its infancy. I pass'd the night without sleep, still firm to my resolution of conquering myself, cost what it might.

The next morning I believed that re-assuming my usual application to study, would be the most effectual means to obtain a certain cure, and so far I was right; but opening my books I see nothing but the image and name of *Eugenia* every where engraven: so fill'd was my mind with her idea. Instead of struggling, I immediately desist, and apply to measures as extravagant as the passion, I was hurried by, could suggest. I fancied then that *Eugenia's* prudence was capable of being a constant stinging reproach to the rashness of my own heart. I resolved to see her, and, to find means so to do, went strait to the academy, where I was certain of meeting my companions.

They no sooner saw me coming than they made up to me, and ask'd me if I would go to the ladies, who had honour'd us with their company the day before to the wood of *Bologne*. I offer'd myself, and we set out. We found the ladies at home, and were admitted to see them, all but *Eugenia*, and she was all I coveted seeing; to speak plain, I was wasting with impatience to see her; we enquir'd for her, and were answer'd, she was well. An answer of so much indifference shock'd me excessively, for I fancied that every one ought to have the same
tenderness

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tenderness for *Eugenia* as I had. When our visit was over and we had taken our leave, I ask'd my friends the meaning of our not having seen *Eugenia*. They told me, she very seldom appear'd, that she was passionately fond of retirement; and that her darling pleasure of life was to converse with the dead.

I was charm'd with this discovery, and gathering from thence that we had the same inclinations, I fed myself with hopes that she might possibly have conceived the same tenderness for me, as I had for her. From that minute I thought no more of a cure, but resolved to seek the means to see her and make a sincere declaration to her of my passion.

Few days after, an occasion offer'd as favourable as I could wish for. *Eugenia's* mother engaged one of my companions to look out for a preceptor for her son, a youth she loved extremely, and much more than *Eugenia*, as I afterwards had reason to know. My companion, little qualified for such a commission, told the lady he would apply to me about it, and even engage me to wait on her with him, that she might the better inform me of her pleasure. He was punctual to his promise, he inform'd me of it, and in so doing gave me more pleasure than he was aware of. Our appointment was fix'd for the next day.

I went resolved to put in execution the ridiculous project I had form'd. Into what error is not love capable of plunging us? I proposed to offer myself for the child's preceptor, to smooth the way to a more frequent access to
Eugenia

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Eugenia, without once considering the disproportion between that family, tho' noble, and my own; or the indignation, to which it would move my father, against me.

Eugenia was the only object of my thoughts, I should have deem'd myself but too happy to suffer every thing for her sake, and should have certainly pursued this extravagance, if I had been alone with her mother; but my companion being with me, I was restrain'd by the fear of letting him into an inclination I wish'd to keep yet a secret.

I had several persons at my beck qualified for the education of youth; but I took care to keep that to myself; I only promised to look out for one, and affected a difficulty of finding one intirely to the purpose, merely to enjoy the pleasure of going often to a place inhabited by *Eugenia*.

I husbanded this pleasure long enough to make myself more familiar in the house, and managed so well, that I was at length requested to have an eye upon the child's education, as well as on the preceptor I should chuse him. I engaged to do it, and was punctual to my engagement. I now saw *Eugenia* frequently, and the more I saw of her, the more I was in love with her; but I had not yet so favourable an opportunity, as I wish'd for, of conversing with her alone, and therefore could not yet break to her the foolish passion that possess'd me.

One day, while I was in company with her mother, she brought me a book and desired my
opinion

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opinion of it. I did not know what was the subject of it, and therefore beg'd she would leave it me to peruse, with a promise of telling her my sentiments of it the next day. I carried it home, kissing it frequently as something made precious by the property *Eugenia* had in it; but great was my surprize, when, opening it, I found there the very maxims in which I had been educated, which I had once so eagerly embraced, and which I now so shamefully made the victims of an unruly passion. 'Twas the *Use of the Passions by F. Senault.*

The book drop'd out of my hands, and I found myself distracted by a croud of different thoughts, none of which were over pleasing. Among the many thoughts I was taken up with, one was, that *Eugenia* had seen into my passion, and put this treatise into my hands for a cure. This reflection carried a lively sting along with it, and I knew not well how to bear a rally, so much the more acute as it was the more secretly level'd. Yet my love, always flattering, assured me, that *Eugenia* could not but hold me in some esteem, since she had shewn me this book only to know my sentiments of it. The flattering one's self is the constant consequence of love, and I chose rather to dwell on this thought than on any other.

Not all the merits of the book could prevail on me to read it, for fear of reading there my own condemnation. You see, sir, my distemper was in an extremity; I may say, it was become frenzy, since I grew afraid of a remedy that might restore me my health. How weak a creature.

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creature is man, how great an enemy to himself, and what dangers has he not to fear from self-love! I was afraid of seeing in this little volume a quite different picture of myself, from that I had form'd; I applauded myself in the very midst of my weakness, and this book would have shewn me to myself in all my deformity. I knew it but too well, but as this was what I most apprehended, I could not resolve to read it. My passion argued more loudly than my reason, my thoughts were taken up with *Eugenia*, and she was all I could resolve to think on.

I brought the book back then to *Eugenia*, return'd it to her, and told her, it was worthy its possessor, and that I would not have deprived her of it a single minute, if I had had but the precaution to examin the title, since the best panegyric of the work was the name of it's author. I am very glad, sir, says *Eugenia*, it is suited to your taste; for my own part, I read it often, persuaded that the great cause of the errors men fall into is the want of knowing, what use to make of their passions, which ever proceeds from ignorance of the proper objects they ought to set before them.

You reason very wisely, madam, said I, but is man always free to chuse one object before another? Doubtless, sir, replies *Eugenia*, I believe a miser and an ambitious man are both capable of feeling that riches and pomp are beneath the dignity of human nature, which was form'd for something more noble than all that is created; this at least is certain that if the
creature

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creature was made for man, he cannot be made for that.

I allow, madam, answer'd I, that the objects of avarice and ambition are unworthy a man of sense; but what will you say to those objects in which the resemblance of ourselves justifies our pursuit of them. Do you fancy then, fair lady, that it is possible to behold *Eugenia* without loving her? or that it is a crime to keep her image deeply engraven on one's heart? What, sir, said she blushing, I find you can banter, which I should have hardly expected from such a philosopher as you are. But assure yourself that your compliment does not make me vain, for I esteem you above foibles. It was now my turn to blush, and *Eugenia's* answer threw me into too great a confusion to be able to make her any reply. But the lady her mother, as weak to the full as myself, took my part with an air of authority. 'Twas in vain for *Eugenia* to say any thing, her good sense made not the least impression on her mother, who instead of reasons, made use of her power, and commanded *Eugenia* to keep silence in so rough a manner that I could not but be extremely concern'd. *Eugenia* retir'd, and I withdrew presently after.

I was musing very seriously in my chamber on what had just happen'd, when an unknown woman brought me a letter, and immediately left me. The letter was from *Eugenia*; I no sooner read her name than I felt a trembling all over me, a cold shivering seized me in every limb, and all my senses revolted; I recollected
all

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all that had pass'd between her and her mother, and dared not read the letter, not doubting but it was full of reproaches, if nothing worse. I took some time to recover myself, then look'd on the letter with an air of timidity, and was seized with unspeakable grief when I perceived it had been moisten'd with tears *Eugenia* had shed in writing it.

There was no reproach I then thought too great to load myself with. I found but too plainly that I was the cause of *Eugenia's* trouble. Alas! said I, was there ever such an unhappy wretch as I am! I endeavour to make *Eugenia* sensible of the excess of love I feel for her, and in doing it, become the unlucky instrument of her pain, without designing it. The tears, the dear, the precious tears, that moisten this letter reproach my imprudence, and express too plainly the grief into which I have plunged the object of my love. *Eugenia*, ah my dear *Eugenia* —— Here my tongue lost utterance, my anguish was too intense to spend itself in words, and the only means of comfort left me was to have recourse to tears.

Soon as grief would permit me I took the letter up again, and read it, but found nothing there of what I expected. *Eugenia*, always discreet, departed not a moment from her character. The contents of her letter are a proof of it.

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S I R,

Notwithstanding the gallant discourse you address'd to me awhile ago, I am so well convinced of your wisdom and discretion, that I am not afraid of writing to you with the greatest confidence. Since our jaunt to the wood of Boulogne, my mother allows me to enjoy no peace at home; there is no ill treatment she thinks bad enough for me; I cannot guess why. I have the less difficulty to mention this to you, as you have so lately been a witness to something of it; else I would have suffer'd on my whole life long, without divulging it. I do not desire you to speak to my mother in my behalf; that would but exasperate her the more against me. I would only have you entreat her to put me into a convent; 'tis all I wish for, and you will obtain it for asking: If then, sir, you would convince me that you really honour me with your esteem; I shall hope for your compliance with the favour I am so free to ask.

EUGENIA.

This letter threw me into a cruel perplexity, and I was intirely at a loss how to act. I love *Eugenia*, said I, with too much ardour to refuse her any thing she asks of me; yet if I comply with her request, I must lose her for ever; and if I do not, how can I be said to love her. The dilemma was extremely puzzling for a man so passionately in love; and therefore before I would come to any decision, I thought proper to learn from herself upon what footing

CONVERSATION I. 23

footing she proposed to enter into the convent. I sat down therefore and wrote her the following letter.

Fair EUGENIA,

CALL not my esteem for you in question, there is nothing I will not undertake to give you a proof of it. If you knew, with what an excess of grief your misfortunes have stung me; you would know that something more than esteem devotes me intirely to your service. But before I undertake any thing, may I be admitted to a few minutes conference with you? The profound respect I have always had for you, would not have suffer'd me to sue for such a favour on any other than the present occasion. But I have a thousand things to say to you in which you are concern'd; hesitate not therefore to indulge me a minute. One interview will finish to convince you that no one can be more respectfully attach'd to you than I am.

Having no one with whom I could confide this letter, I was obliged to watch a favourable opportunity to deliver it myself. I found one a few days after, and gave it to her. She read it, and waited my going out to desire me to meet her in the gardens of *Luxemburgh* by fix the next morning.

I was earlier than the sun at the place appointed, and had all the leisure requisite to make very serious reflections on the excessive love I felt for *Eugenia*, and the measures she was thinking

ing

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ing to take. I easily conceived, that the uneasinesses her mother gave her, push'd her to this extremity; her wit, her youth, her sweetness of temper, and her benevolent disposition, all assured me that she deserved much better usage. A secret compassion then seized my whole soul, and foreseeing that if she embraced a religious life on this account, she would fall the victim of a mother's fantastical humour, a flood of tears unman'd me; and I could not bear the shocking scene which represented to me a young lady of such extraordinary merit immolated to hatred, without the least appearance of reason.

I was in this melancholy condition when *Eugenia* appear'd, and I could not restrain my tears enough to hide them from her. Ah, sir, said she, what do I see? you weep! What then, have you nothing to entertain me with but tears and sighs? Forgive, said I, fair *Eugenia*, forgive this distilling anguish, I cannot hide. Can I be convinced of the confidence you repose in me, and not be sensible to all the tender emotions of a real friend? The heart must be of stone which your affliction would not melt, but what enhances your misfortune is that grief urges you to take such measures as can only serve to augment it. No, *Eugenia*, I can never resolve to solicit your mother's consent to what you propose; I am too much your friend ever to become a voluntary instrument to what must make you wretched. This, *Eugenia*, is the sum of what I had to tell you.

Eugenia, after desiring the women who attended her to withdraw, said to me: I cannot believe,

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believe, sir, that you have nothing more to say to me, or that bare compassion should excite you to tears. Why are you not more open, do you think me too indiscreet to be trusted? If I am, sir, a monastery shall be the depository of your secret. Farewel then, *Eugenia*, I replied, since a convent has such charms with you, since I cannot divert you from a purpose so fatal to my peace. — What do you say, says *Eugenia*. I say, fair creature, I have conceived for you the most innocent the most tender passion nature can inspire. There is no time left for dissembling it any longer, I am going to lose you for ever, and I see myself upon the brink of being condemn'd to drag on a languishing length of life, without seeing you; is it not just then that I should snatch at least the comfort of making you my complaint. I know this confession cannot but offend you, yet forgive, *Eugenia*, forgive the ardour which urges me to speak: and why should I remain any longer silent, when already my tears have but too plainly betray'd the secret? Yes, *Eugenia*, I love, I must love you; your understanding, your beauty, your conduct, your disposition, all in you robs me of myself, I tell it you now, and now must lose you. Was ever fate of man so wretched as mine? Alas! must I lose you, *Eugenia*, and must these eyes, these weeping eyes be condemn'd never more to behold the lovely object which makes all their felicity? Well then it must be so, and the only surviving comfort left me will be the sadly pleasing remembrance of this respectful acknowledgment

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of my love. I will carry you every where engraven in my breast, every where will I proclaim your virtue, and honour you as a perfect model of modesty and innocence, which to my grave shall remind me of my own weakness and your triumph. Farewel, *Eugenia*! dear *Eugenia*! long, long farewell.

Pierced with acutest anguish I was going to retire, but she stop'd me and said; Know you, sir, what perplexity you throw me into? Tho' I have a heart incapable of loving so tenderly as you do, from a persuasion I am in that there is no possibility of loving but at some expence of innocence; yet I cannot but be touch'd with your concern, and if I must be more open with you, I confess that it is less the motive of grief than that of reason induces me to enter into a religious state. Can you think, sir, that pleasure has any part in this choice? No, no. I have been too conversant in monasteries not to know that That, as well as other stations, has it's difficulties. We carry ourselves every where with us, and the same discontents will follow us into a convent which we had in the world, if we carry the same dispositions in with us unconquer'd. But still, sir, I am now of an age to fix. If I continue unmarried, I have nothing to expect but the severest of persecutions; and to marry, there are so few men in the world that could make me happy, that I have no courage to come to any resolution; neither is my fortune considerable enough to enable me to please myself in my own choice. You see, sir, that poor *Eugenia* is born to be wretched.

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wretched. However I have reading and education enough to contract my desires and console myself in a little cell, where I will endeavour to live in a perpetual oblivion of the world, and study how to correct my own failings mindless of the imperfections of others. Oblige me then, sir, by speaking to my mother, and gaining me her consent.

Yes *Eugenia*, said I, I will speak to your mother but it shall be to ask you in marriage. Ah, sir, said she, what are you going to do? Would you become my executioner? Do you know to what danger you would expose yourself? Ah, 'tis a sign you do not know my mother. There is nothing —— Alas, what was I going to say! I beseech you, sir, lay aside such a thought, which cannot but end in my ruin. 'Tis *Eugenia*, the unhappy *Eugenia* tells you so. Farewel, sir, 'tis time to depart; perhaps, I may tell you more another time, but at present it will not be proper. If you find any other expedient than demanding me in marriage, I leave it to your discretion, but do not contribute to make me more uneasy than I already am. A deep sigh put a full stop to her words, and she retired.

I admired now more than ever the wisdom, the discretion, the modesty, and experience of this young lady at so tender an age, for she was yet but seventeen. But when I reflected on the terror with which *Eugenia* was struck when I mention'd her mother; I sought in vain to penetrate the cause, it was such a riddle as I found impossible to give any tolerable guess at. It was

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now late, and I retired home resolved on a visit to the mother in the afternoon.

I went accordingly and found the lady by herself. After the first civilities, I ask'd her concerning *Eugenia*, to which she answer'd, that she was in her room, and That was the fittest place for her. But madam, said I, too much solitude may impair her health. Pooh, pooh, sir, replies she, she must use herself to it, 'twill be a less trouble to her to keep silence when she is a nun, and that is all she is fit for. Such a speech was a clap of thunder to me, and I knew not what to impute it to. I broke off the conversation, by calling to me her little boy, and questioning him about his studies; but I confess to you, it was in a very dissipated manner.

I was still asking him some questions, when his mother interrupted me with saying, How happy must children be, sir, who had such a father as you, how compleat would their education be, and how different would they themselves be from all other children! She went on in this strain for some time, and I answer'd her civilities in terms usual on such an occasion. But how great my surprize, when rising to take leave, she press'd me to stay with her a little longer! This she did several times, which appear'd the more extraordinary as she had never done it before. However I imputed it to her being alone, a thing which seldom happen'd. But at last I got up, took my leave, and left her.

The

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The affectation with which she bid me, adieu, was not very pleasing to me, and the earnestness with which she intreated me to come to see her the next day fully convinced me, of what I suspected, that she had a disposition towards me, which did not become her. *Eugenia* was much in the right to hinder me from applying to such a mother to ask her in marriage. I was no longer surprized at the ill treatment she endured, but admired as much the young lady's modesty and discretion as I had in horror the mother's extravagant conduct. I resolved however to go again the next day, according to promise, that by founding the mother, I might become the more capable of rendering the daughter service.

I cannot say whether the good lady had observed or not the coldness with which I return'd her civilities; she was not at home when I went there the next day, at least I was told so. But her woman came to receive me, and desired me to walk in, assuring me that her lady would not be long before she return'd. And indeed she delay'd coming no longer than was necessary to give her woman an opportunity of holding the disagreeable discourse she was instructed to entertain me with. If the affair had not been of so serious a nature as it was, there had been matter enough indeed to make a man laugh himself into convulsions.

Figure to yourself an antiquated hag whose skin is shrivel'd like a mouldy roll of parchment, with little bloodshot eyes peeping thro' their wrinkled lids quite bare of lashes, her hol-

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low cheeks as brown and flabby as an unpuff'd bladder, her long and picked nose dropping like a still, and struggling with her chin to hide her hideous mouth, whose spacious entrance discovers when she laughs a wide and deep cavern void of any ornaments but two enormous teeth within like the tusks of a wild boar, and fenced without with loosely scatter'd hairs like the whiskers of a tiger. Such was the burlesque figure employ'd to set forth to me her lady's charms, in all the terms likely to kindle in my heart a lascivious flame.

I listen'd to her but very impatiently, and was upon the point of treating her as she deserved, when her lady came in deck'd like a queen in a tragedy. Her affected dress and airs made a quite different impression on me from what she proposed. *Eugenia's* simplicity, with all her native charms presented themselves to my imagination, and I could not look on her mother but with all the scorn due to an actress. The thoughts of *Eugenia* forced some sighs from me, and her mother vainly imputed them to the power of her own beauty. What, sir, says she, methinks you sigh? Is there any beauty then attractive enough to force a sigh from such an accomplish'd gentleman as you? Sure, you must be but little acquainted with your own merit. I fancy there are more ladies who sigh for you, than there are capable of making you sigh. There are so few such pretty men as you, that I dare be sure, you can appear no where without wounding and subduing the hearts of all who see you. You triumph every where,
sir,

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fir; happy the beauty who will be able to triumph over you.

I plainly saw that it could not but be dangerous to return any serious answer to speeches, which evidently appear'd to be the over-flowings of a violent passion. And therefore I said to her, madam, I cannot see on what account I deserve, that you should form so flattering an idea of me; this picture is too much loaded for me to be able to know myself in it. I am very sensible that men like me, who are fond of their closet, are very unqualified to make conquests; and I cannot help thinking that a gallant philosopher must be a very insipid mortal.

I thought as much, fir, said she, that the heart of a philosopher must be no easy conquest; but then the victory is so much the more glorious when it is obtain'd. If we were now in the metamorphosing age, a beauty might stand some chance for it, by changing herself into a book; nay her triumph would be certain. I do not know, madam, said I, whether or no I should suffer myself to be catch'd by her, unless indeed I could change women as often as I do volumes. Ah, fir, says she, this is indeed the stroke of a philosopher, who knows as little how to constrain himself as how to dissemble genteelly the sentiments he ought to conceal. Did not I tell you, madam, that there is no sympathy between gallantry and a philosopher; how then can you be surprized at my answer? Sir, says she, you can be better bred when you please, and there is a great deal of the affected in the strain you assume at

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present. I understand you better than you think I do, and shall not easily forgive this fling. The manner of her uttering these last words made me sensible that she was excessively piqued. All I could say after was not sufficient to dissipate a thoughtfulness, which scarcely left her at liberty to make me any answer.

When I was alone and had well weigh'd every circumstance of this adventure, I immediately conceived that it would be proper to use a little dissimulation with this lady, and I began to repent pushing the rallery so far; as I had reason to fear that all the rage of her indignation would burst upon my lovely *Eugenia*. But I was soon of another mind, I foresaw that if I counterfeited any love for her, I should only fuel her passion to such an excess as might become formidable; for I very well knew, what an amorous woman is capable of, when she sees herself slighted. Her love degenerates into rage, and her rage is a furiously rapid torrent, which nothing is capable of stemming.

I thought the best method I could take was to abstain from going near her for some time; I had a mind to see what effect such an absence might have; and, as I was greatly apprehensive that the zeal I had shewn in espousing her daughter's cause might have given her some suspicion of my love, I chose rather to deny myself the pleasure of seeing *Eugenia*, than to expose her to the fury of her mother's amorous passion. My love did not blind me enough to make me pursue my Inclinations at the expence of my beloved object; I thought it beneath a
great

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great soul to prefer it's own happiness to that of the object it loves. I thought this sentiment worthy a lover of *Eugenia*, and my whole ambition was to please and deserve her. I absented then for some time, and had done so longer, but for a letter I received from *Eugenia*, pressing me to return to the house. It was couch'd in the following terms:

S I R,

I Write to you with the utmost precipitation: my mind is but just free enough to be sensible of the excess of my wretchedness and to intreat you to call on my mother without delay.

EUGENIA.

The vivacity of this letter threw me into a perplexity I had never known before; and an infinity of thoughts overwhelm'd me. I scarce knew what I was doing, or what I would do. I call'd for my sword, and had it in my hand; I order the coach, and forgetting the next moment the order I have given, go out on foot; at length I get there, and see sorrow sitting in the looks of all the domestics; *Eugenia* appears — At these words the Knight stop'd short, and the stubborn tears which forc'd their forbidden way along his manly cheeks, pathetically spoke the grief which silenced him. Pardon me, sir, says he to *Lactifer*: the remains of an almost worn out remembrance of my misfortunes force these drops from my eyes. Pardon these last struggles of my expiring weakness, these sobs you are

are privy to; and judge hence the excess of my surprize when I beheld my dear *Eugenia* melting in tears, her hair dishevel'd, her looks inflamed, and her lips pale and trembling, throw herself at my feet and embrace them. What a sight for a lover! You know, sir, said she, with a faltering voice, you know I have no more a father, and the sad remembrance of his tender love serves only to make me the more sensible of my mother's hatred to me. All the pledge which remains to me of his love is his dear picture, which I wear in this bracelet, and which I water a thousand times a day with my tears. Alas! for what hidden crime have I deserved to lose him so soon, in so tender an age, void of all succour, and sinking beneath a load of unearn'd afflictions! Whence do I see myself thus reduced to implore mercy and succour from a stranger on my knees! Ah, ah, my dear father, such is the hapless condition of that wretched daughter you once loved so tenderly! Such is the melancholy situation of your dear *Eugenia*, as you used to call her! 'Tis your succour then, sir, I now implore; can you be cruel enough to refuse it me?

I would fain have raised her up, but my endeavours were to no purpose. No, no, said she, leave me to kneel; no other posture suits so well the present state of the unfortunate *Eugenia*. She was going on, when a coach was heard to stop, succeeded with a rapping at the door. Immediately a servant comes running in with terror in his countenance. For heaven's sake, sir, prevail on miss to withdraw; my lady
is

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is coming. *Eugenia* retired, and after making some struggles with myself, I thought proper to dissemble the rage I boil'd with; I went down to the court and had command enough of myself to hand her ladyship from the coach to her apartment.

At first sight, I saw something so terrifying in her eyes, that I felt a secret horror all over me. I fear'd every thing for *Eugenia*, and she was the only object I was capable of feeling any fear or concern for. No sooner had her ladyship taken off her hood, than I was immediately able to see into the situation of her heart. There was a wanness spread over her whole face, and such a disturbance sat lowring on her brows as spoke an uncommon distraction, wherefore I thought it right to conform my words to her disposition of mind. Ah, madam, said I, what can have thus blasted the bloom of that lovely face. In reality she was very handsome, and but five and thirty years of age. Alas! sir, says she, with a sigh, I am struck to death and past all recovery. I tried every means to prevent the disease which overpowers me, but all were vain; and of all my confidants, the only one I have now to consult is yourself; but I cannot bring myself to believe you have regard enough for me to have any concern for my feeble condition. I have destroy'd myself, and have consented to outlive the present minute only to ask of you a favour which would not be refused a dying criminal. You are witness to the state I am in, life has forsaken my eyes, and livid death sits trembling

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on my lips; for pity's sake do not abandon me. 'Tis to your care I would trust the interest of my children, and after I have declared my intentions to you, 'tis in your arms I would resign my breath, by your hands I would have my eyelids closed, and death will be welcome to me if it draws but one tear from you at my departure.

Such insidious words were capable of surprising and mollifying any heart but mine; but I took care to be upon my guard apprised of the malice they contain'd. Wherefore I answer'd her, madam, I should be apprehensive of depriving your children of their darling duty which is the honour of serving you; if I should blindly accept the proposal you make me; and it seems to me much more natural for you to leave them this comfort than to commit it to a stranger. I am far from inclining to refuse the succour you demand, and I am capable of giving; but to close your eyes and receive your last sighs is a right reserved for those hands which are dearest to you, and can there be any so precious to you as those of your own children? Ah, says she sobbing, what do I suffer! How fast my agony augments! I feel within a flame which devours me, and yet all the spasm I endure cannot force one tender look from you. I could not have believ'd you capable of so much cruelty? What do I say? I cannot yet believe it; all your severity is reserved for me: at least have pity on my son, and take him into your protection; his innocence demands your pity, and it would be barbarous to punish him for his

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his mother's weakness. What do I hear, madam, what means this term, punishment. Your son is dear to me, and if the taking all the care of him I now do can give you peace, you may rely on my promise of never diminishing it. Farewell, then, madam, you want rest, and in your weak condition it is not proper for you to talk any longer. Ah cruel, said she stopping me, 'tis you who have thrown me into this condition, you have but too well understood me; what then have I done to deserve the scorn you treat me with? Have I incurr'd your displeasure in revealing to you a passion, you yourself are the object of? Is it a crime to love what appears to be amiable? Alas! not you, not even you have been able to fence your heart from love; and I should perhaps resolve to die content, were I not too sensible that the heart you refuse me is devoted to another. I blush at talking to you of love, a shame you might have spared me. But the despair I am in is such as forces duty to give place to love; and if it has urg'd me to disclose my weakness to you, my present state consoles me with the hopes that your triumph will not be very long——Well, sir, what have you nothing then to answer? Can you not feign to love me, but for a few minutes? Approaching death will soon release you from the dull constraint. Ah! Can you be so cruel to refuse me the slender comfort of forcing from you one sigh of compassion, if not of love.

Madam, I cannot too much lament the melancholy situation you are in; but what you
would

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would exact of me, is not in my power. My heart was never form'd for love, and if I have sustain'd a slight attack of it, I took care to give it an early repulse. However I have but too sensibly felt it's rigour to learn to pity those who are unfortunate enough to be subdued by it. Judge then, madam, of the greatness of my compassion for you; 'tis all you require of me, and all I am capable of offering you. I fly all the approaches of love, I dread it's tyranny, I know my own weakness, and am but too sensible that, if my heart should once go such a length as to love, and I be rash enough to give it it's full scope, no heart would be more a captive than mine. And to whom, madam, could I devote it but to you, whose merit is equal to your beauty? But alas! cold as it is at present, it cannot be worthy your acceptance.

Oh insensible of every charm! She twice exclaim'd, Oh insensible of every charm! Your dissimulation, sir, betrays you, spite of all your efforts; you would be less expert in answers, if less in love. No matter, you push me to extremes, and I am determin'd to shew you the sincerity of my love, beyond your power of doubting. The last favour I have to ask you is to pass this one day along with me, however irksome it may be to you.

It is easy to conceive that I had many reasons not to exasperate her any farther, I consented then to remain with her the whole day. But during our conversation, which was longer than I here relate it, *Eugenia*, anxious to know what pass'd between her mother and me, and
wanting

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wanting to speak to me, as I already told you, had sent in my name for my footman. When he came she sent him to her mother's apartment, to tell me that some gentlemen were waiting for me at home on business of moment. I went with him directly, after having solemnly promised her ladyship to return in an instant. I met *Eugenia*, who led me to her chamber, and 'tis hard to say, which of us was most happy in this interview.

We have no time to lose, said she, tell me in few words, what has pass'd between my mother and you. I would fain have spared her the pain of hearing it, by stifling the reality, but I could not succeed. She interrupted me with telling me that she was not ignorant of her mother's passion for me. There is no medium, says she, you must marry her, or find a way to get me out of the house, where I have not the power to stay any longer; and to let you briefly into the secret, her love for you degenerates into madness; she suspects you are in love with me, and my life is no longer in safety 'till I get from hence. Say then, sir, which of these two methods will you chuse? There is indeed a third in your power, which is to retreat and abandon poor, unhappy *Eugenia* to the rigour of her fate.

Ah, lovely *Eugenia*, said I, abandon you! How unworthy should I be of the confidence you repose in me, was I capable of harbouring such a thought! I have no leisure now to express the tenderness of my sentiments in relation to you, 'tis in serving you I mean to give you
proofs.

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proofs of my love. Farewel, dear lady, I go to make the best use I can of the little time I have left, and will return with all possible speed.

I went directly to a friend, whom I made privy to the whole affair, and we agree'd upon presenting a petition to the King. I drew it up myself, and I leave you to guess, sir, how pressing must be a petition dictated by love. My friend promised me to present it the next morning to his majesty, and I posted away to the apartment of *Eugenia's* mother.

I found her in bed, and her ill looking woman in waiting by her. Come, said she stretching forth her hand to me, come and receive my last farewell. Immediately she order'd *Eugenia* to be call'd, whom, as soon as she enter'd, she presented to me, saying, you have not had the power to love me, sir, may I be happy enough to prevail upon you to receive from my hand this second part of me, or must I die with the grief of seeing your hatred extended to all that belongs to me. Happy my daughter if she can attract your affection. Dying as I am, I am ambitious enough to wish it, and 'tis not without regret that I expire without seeing the end of my wish. Learn then, sir, from the present I make you, how much I love you; I offer my own heart a victim to the interests of yours. May not this be call'd loving indeed?

Madam, said I to her, the power which nature gives you over *Eugenia*, does not give you a right to dispose of her heart. I am very much obliged to you for the gracious offer you make

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make me; but If I do not receive *Eugenia* from herself, I cannot receive her from your hands. We have not the liberty of loving whom we will; inclination of heart must be our guide in love, and it is that which makes all the happiness of an alliance which cannot be dissolved but by death. I have not yet merited *Eugenia's* heart, and it is not at present time to think of doing it. Let us think now, madam, of the means of restoring you; that is the great affair which ought to employ our attention for some time.

The whole drift of her discourse was to draw from me a declaration of the love I had for *Eugenia*, purposely to sacrifice her, on this pretext, to her own rage; but she found me too much my own master to make any such confession: she call'd for jelly, and immediately the woman I have already mentioned, went to fetch her some. I had my eye always upon her, and observed from the different changes of her countenance the various motions of her heart. Sometimes love with all it's softness dwell'd in her looks, and her eyes were fix'd on me: at other times she would look on *Eugenia*, and then envy, disgust, and madness sat on her brow. At length the jelly was brought, and then I perceived an inward gladness spread over her face, without being able to guess at the cause.

When it was given to her she affected a dislike to it; poh, says she, what jelly you have brought me! have you a mind to poison me? I got up, look'd at it, but could not find any thing amiss in it. Taste it, sir, says she, see whether

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whether that is a jelly fit for a sick person. I pretended to taste it, but I must own that the odd something I had observed on this occasion made me afraid of being disorder'd, if I should swallow any of it. The many superstitions I had heard and read of came to my mind, and discouraged me.

Probably she imagin'd I had taken some of it, and that it had wrought the effect she expected from it. She order'd the room to be clear'd of all who were by, and no sooner were we alone, than with an air of tenderness she address'd me: come, come and learn in my embraces the love I feel for you. I leave you to guess, sir, whether a declaration so contrary to modesty was sufficient or not to make a man of honour blush. 'Twas necessary however to dissemble a while some degrees of tenderness, to save *Eugenia* from destruction; and cruel as this constraint was to me, I thought it a duty to submit.

Love is a self-flatterer, and *Eugenia's* mother thought my passion for her as great now as her's for me. Confess, sir, said she, that there is no pleasure in life so great as that of loving and owning we do; Why have you delay'd my joy, my happiness so long; if love is the price of love, be assured, sir, that no one has more dearly earn'd your tenderness than I have. Do but behold the state you have plung'd me into, does the languid condition I am in with the love of you deserve no return from you?

Madam, said I, who can remain long insensible to your love? Your beauty, your merit,
duty

CONVERSATION I. 43

duty itself ought to have engaged me to prevent you, and spare you the pain of a declaration too flattering not to give me pleasure. But to taste the sweets of our mutual love a little dissimulation will be requisite, there is a certain decorum necessary to guard us from the reflections of the world, which is of itself but too prone to be censorious. What say you, madam, will not a little mystery in love add a keenness to it's edge. Ah, says she, I should long since have enjoy'd that pleasure, if I had been able to entertain any hopes of your loving me one day. But the slenderness of that hope was the extremity of my anguish. Now I breathe again, and I leave wholly to you, sir, the conduct of our amours, guide them as your judgment shall direct you; your mind is more at liberty than mine. I take it all upon myself, said I, and be your only care to recover, Farewell, madam! She gave me her hand, and I kiss'd it.

When I was once out of the house, I feel'd the same pleasure a man does, who has escaped a wreck, after long tossing in a violent storm; but coming home, I consider'd love no more with the same peaceful eye I had hitherto done. The violence of it's motions, the excesses to which it urges those who are unfortunately subdued by it, and the extravagance I had just been an eye witness to, made this passion appear horrible to me. 'Tis true I was not affected towards *Eugenia* in the same manner as her mother was towards me; yet I question'd myself whether or not, if *Eugenia* did not love me, I should

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should not be urged to make use of the same means to make her love me, as her mother had used to make me love her. Who can assure me, said I, that I should not be liable to the same criminal weakness? I am free from it to day; but who knows that I shall be so to morrow; and what reproaches should I not deserve, if I gave into such a crime? I began from that time to mistrust myself, and my own sentiments became suspect to me. I consider'd that love, like all other passions, has it's infancy, and different climacterics; that it's several degrees of growth are the more to be fear'd as their ill effects are infallible, when neglecting to combat it as soon as felt, we give ourselves up to it's free course; and that when this passion is come to it's utmost excess, which every man's natural foible makes him liable to, the extreme weakness it reduces him to, is seldom unattended with a repentance the more aggravating for being then intirely usefess. I pass'd the night in these reflections, and got up early in the morning in order to render *Eugenia* the service I had promised her. My love for her was, in truth, extremely tender, but happily had nothing in it contrary to the profoundest respect; however, as I had reason to be diffident of myself, I felt a secret pleasure in the thought of putting her into a convent, tho' it was an excessive chagrine to me to lose her.

When I perceived it was much about the time when the king's warrant would be served, I went to *Eugenia's* house, to observe what pass'd. The first servant I met told me that
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the King had sent orders for *Eugenia* to be put into a monastery; that her mother was beside herself; that there was no injurious language she did not vent against me, because she took me for the instrument which had procured this warrant from the King; and that *Eugenia* had felt all the effects of her fury, but for the interposition of the messenger. He appear'd to be overjoy'd to see his lady punish'd, and *Eugenia* deliver'd from the hands of her executioner. So true is it that virtue will always find means to make itself known, and force the world to do it justice in the worst of circumstances.

I desired him to bring me to the speech of *Eugenia*, and as soon as I saw her, I ask'd her if she was pleased. With what should I be pleased, says she? 'Tis true, sir, the King has been so good to redeem me from slavery, but I leave a mother alone, in a condition worthy the greatest compassion. 'Tis a long time she has made me suffer, but she is still my mother, and I cannot but be touch'd with her affliction. Oh how lovely to my eyes was *Eugenia* adorn'd with these sentiments. I admire your virtue, fair *Eugenia*, but there is now no time for such reflections. Are you ready to go? But, sir, replies she, what will become of my poor mother! Alas! said I, what succour are you capable of giving her in your present situation, your presence will but exasperate her more. No matter, said she, I would wait with pleasure a lucky minute to comfort her, and if I died beneath her blows, I should die content, in falling a victim to my duty.

Imme-

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Immediately I observed she grew pale, a cold sweat bedew'd her lovely face, and alarm'd me excessively. I dared not conduct her to her own apartment, so I took her to the kitchen, committing her to the care of the cook, the only woman in the house I dared trust her to. While she was busied in fetching her to herself, I step'd aside to consult the messenger, who had served the King's warrant, and agree'd with him to carry her off without delay, while he staid behind to prevent the ill consequences of her mother's extravagance.

I went and order'd a coach, and came back again. At my return I found *Eugenia* in a very low state, and was at a loss what measures to take. She perceived the perplexity I was in; let the condition you see me in, give you no concern, said she, I am resolved upon going; the King must be obey'd. She gave me her hand to help her up, and calling her maid, I have no other reward, said she, to give you, for all the care you have taken of me, than this slight token of my gratitude. I am not insensible, how much you have had my misfortunes at heart; but now let your compassion change object. I leave behind me a mother more to be pitied than myself; if you love me, take care of her. I recommend her earnestly to your attention. Let your resentment be no obstacle to my desire, but remember she is the mother of that unhappy *Eugenia* whom you love. Farewel. She embraced her, and at our setting out we left all the servants dissolving in tears. I was not less tenderly affected than any of them,
at

CONVERSATION I. 47

at the sight of so much virtue in such distress.

We got into the coach, but were not there half a quarter of an hour when *Eugenia* drop'd asleep. I attributed her heaviness to her fatigue and affliction, but how great was my surprize when I perceived a lividness on her lips! I felt her pulse, but it had no motion. I took then the liberty of laying my hand on her breast, and found it cold as marble. I hesitated not an instant to wake her; ah, sir, said she opening her eyes, why have you awaken'd me. I was happy, methought I was dying, and reaching in the arms of death an asylum from all my misery; now you recall me to all my anguish. I am wretched indeed then, said I to her, if all the care love has inspired me to take of you is not capable of affording you one means of comfort! Ah! think at least, dear *Eugenia*, that my life depends on yours. Cherish it then for pity, if not for love. Sir, said she, if *Eugenia* had been born to be happy, Heaven had not placed so wide a disproportion between us; nought but a perfect union with you could have made my happiness. My mother's ill treatment of me had already put an end to my life, if your love for me had not given me force to endure it with so much the more patience, as I knew that love to be the sole cause of my sufferings. I took care to hide them from you, for fear of exposing you to some fatal excess, as well as to the grief of seeing those sufferings without remedy. 'Tis true I am at present in a very different situation, but I feel my veins frozen, and my blood stagnated within me; I will not
dive

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dive into the cause, perhaps I should too easily discover it; let it suffice to tell you that dying *Eugenia* desires to hear no more of love. Farewel, sir, said she, seeing we were arrived, farewel, never regret me, my sorrows are near an end. Must I, to console you for the loss of unhappy *Eugenia*, own to you that I am concern'd to part with you? Take then, said she, embracing me, this earnest of my sincerity. Then taking from her arm the picture of her father, and giving it to me; here, added she, is what I value most upon earth.

I had neither power to answer a word nor vent a tear; but stood like a man stupified, before the abbess, who was my relation, 'till at length distraction giving way, judge, madam, said I, how dear to me is the depomite I trust in your hands, by the regret I discover in parting with it out of my own. I have prefer'd your monastery to all others, persuaded that our nearness of blood would induce you to have the same tenderness for her I have. This, madam, I expect from your goodness. Turning towards *Eugenia* I would have said, farewell; but grief denied my words an utterance. She held out once more her hand to me, and I was making forward to embrace it, but was suddenly surprised with such a weakness as loss'd me to myself; and they took that occasion to make her enter into the convent,

When I recover'd from my swoon, nothing was neglected to dissipate my trouble, but all had not power to ease me, deprived of the sight of *Eugenia*. I got into the coach, and retired

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retired home, to give myself up to my just grief. You may easily conceive, sir, how great my affliction must then be; but it was not yet come to it's full height.

The next morning my servant brought me word that a maid from the abby desired to speak to me. Oh heaven! I then exclaim'd, my *Eugenia* is dead. She came up, and looking at her, well, said I, what sad tidings are you come to bring me? is *Eugenia* departed? She was a good deal disturb'd, and knew not how to answer, but at length own'd to me that she was dead. Her body, said she, upon examining was all over infected with poison, all means possible were tried to disperse it, but it was too late. Go, said I, farewell, leave me to myself.

Well then, said I, wretched parent, are you satisfied now? Your mad passion has hurried you to dip your hands in your own blood, and *Eugenia*, lovely, dear, *Eugenia* is the innocent victim of your rage. Ah, thou art already too guilty, not to become more so by my vengeance! I utter'd these last words so very loud that my servants overhear'd me, and were in fear for me. They sought me all the succour they could among my friends, who took my affliction sincerely to heart. They neglected no means to comfort me, but all they could obtain of me was to calm a little the vivacity of my grief; and I believe I shall not be so easily consoled for the loss I sustain'd.

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There

50 CONVERSATION I.

There remains still, fir, to tell you how I came to be a Knight of *Malta*, but it is now late, and therefore, if you please, we'll remit the continuation of my history to to-morrow. *Lactifer*, charm'd with the Knight, consented to it with pleasure, protesting himself to be deeply affected with his misfortunes, adding withal that he should esteem himself happy if he could any way contribute towards the alleviation of his sorrow. Thus they parted after having fix'd their second interview for the next day at three in the afternoon.

End of the first conversation.



CONVER.

CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

Second CONVERSATION.

LACTIFER, found something so extraordinary in the Knight's history, that he discover'd new matter of surprize every time he recall'd to mind the circumstances of it. He did not conceal his astonishment from him, when they met the next day. But what is there in it so wonderful, says the Knight? In *Paris* there daily happen things of a more extraordinary as well as tragic nature, were they but known. For tho' there are many persons of worth and honour in that great city, it contains a much greater number of people, whose flagitiousness has no bounds. I easily believe it, says *Lactifer*, for the same truth is but too notorious to such as are acquainted with *London*. Yet I cannot persuade myself that any corruption, even the greatest, is capable

ble of stifling the voice of nature, or that blood will not always gain it's point of the passions, however violent they may be. In short is a mother less a parent for being in love?

No, says the Knight, but there are sad and grievous circumstances which may make a mother forget what she is. Is not the austere virtue frequently attack'd with weaknesses, and has not the most virtuous man need of all his vigilance to support the character? Judge then, sir, of the dreadful and inevitable fall of such as can only reckon the minutes of their life by the trifles which have fill'd them up. Always out of themselves, they are strangers to all which passes within them, and for want of a little foresight, are overset by every puff.

I take you right, says *Lactifer*, and experience demonstrates that a man not sufficiently employ'd, has no other principle of conduct than passion and whim, which stand him in the stead of reason. But where nature is in the case, is man so easily overset? Does not blood speak intelligibly enough to stay the rash hand which is lifted to execute any evil project of passion? And is natural love too feeble to beat down the arm we have rais'd against ourselves in the person of a child, which is really a part of ourselves. For I must still come back to *Eugenia's* mother, whose extravagance I cannot comprehend. A little attention to what daily passes in mankind, says the Knight, will help us more than any thing to understand this.

There is no man but what is born in love with himself, and this love is the spring of all
his

CONVERSATION II. 53

his actions; but they who seem most in love with themselves do not always love themselves best. What more natural than to endeavour at the preservation of a life we receive from the hands of heaven, and which we ought to set a value upon; and yet how many persons are seen to lavish it away, thro' a senseless ostentation and ridiculous vanity? *Alexander* so extravagantly amorous of that phantom, glory, might have acquired much more, if he had made it his ambition to support such people as were oppressed with tyranny, instead of loading others with oppression who had done him no wrong. But the title of conqueror turn'd his head, and this manner of loving himself, if it was not agreeable to reason, was so at least to the ambition which enslaved him, and to the vanity which held him in chains.

A woman is always ambitious to please. She loves her children, but the vanity of seeing herself beloved by a man lords it over blood and nature; and she beholds her children as so many living parish-registers of the approaching autumn of her fading beauty. Needs there any thing more to draw her hatred upon what she ought to love? Such a woman is indeed greatly in love with herself, but cannot be said to love herself well.

There are then two sorts of self-love to be distinguish'd: the one seeks only the gratification of the passions; such is the love which ambitious, covetous, or lustful persons bear themselves: the other seeks satisfaction in conquering the passions, and makes a man sensible
that

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that his felicity consists in being the man all his life, that is, perfectly free from all which subjects others to a shameful slavery. Both these kinds of self-love are passions, but with this difference that the former strays wide of reason, the latter chuses reason for it's guide.

'Tis easy to find out that these two jarring passions cannot associate in the same breast. That which places satisfaction in the pursuit of our corrupt inclinations is much more capable of sinking us into disorder, than the other is of lifting us above it; stifling in us, by it's repeated clamours, the voice of reason; which inordinate passion is never willing to listen to: such is man.

Now, sir, says the Knight, tell me; what was nature in *Eugenia's* mother? 'Tis true, a child is part of ourself, which blood compels us to love; still it is not absolutely ourself, and therefore we love this self better than it. Passion, inordinate love, spoke too strongly in the mother against the daughter; and reason, which ought to have silenced it, was itself silenced by the disorderly love which agitated her.

It is directly the same with other passions. If avarice were not predominant in the hearts of some men, there would be no such thing as usury, a crime as diametrically opposite to nature; as the sacrifice of a daughter by a mother in love; since the law of nature forbids both alike.

The truth of your reasoning convinces me, sir, says *Lactifer*, and daily experience confirms what you say; but such conduct appears to me
void

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void of all sense. So far I agree with you, says the Knight, but every predominant passion is a settled drunkenness which robs us of the power of reasoning. I know it but too well, by my own sad experience. You have seen my weakness, and the errors it trail'd me into. I have conceal'd from you no one of all the sentiments which love raised in my heart; and nothing less than the death of my too lovely *Eugenia* could have backen'd me from the brink of the precipice I stood upon.

Soon after her death, a fit of sickness, which surpris'd my father, compel'd me to leave *Paris*. I set out then for my own country, resolv'd never to involve myself again, but to pass the remainder of my life in a state of freedom, to be absolute master of myself, and to avoid every occasion capable of trepanning me into a labyrinth whose entrances are more in number and easier to be found than it's outlets.

My father died soon after my return home, and left me heir to a very considerable estate. I knew very well that it was the part of a man of sense to make choice of some state, but I found it no easy matter to determin. I was afraid of marriage; I saw no woman like *Eugenia*, and the indissoluble knot of matrimony would have been an insupportable burden to me without a perfect union of hearts, which is rarely seen, because never to be obtain'd but by similar inclinations, and sympathy of soul.

An ecclesiastical state seem'd perfectly suitable to my fondness for study; but the consciousness of my weakness for *Eugenia* made me

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tremble at the thought of a state of life which requires the utmost innocence, and a sanctity of manners proof against every trial. So that to secure myself from the dangers I might incur by rashly engaging in either of these stations, I enter'd into the military order of *Malta*, about four years ago; and now I am here to transact some affairs, I am desirous of putting an end to; that I may be able to retire from the busy world, where the generality of men are only such in outward form.

What you say, sir, says *Lactifer*, is very true; but what I most admire at, is the difficulty of rendering them sociable. Society among men, says the Knight, can only keep pace with their mutual agreement in the rules of their conduct. If their rules are different, how should they themselves agree; and if they have no rules, how can honest men associate with them? Religion and reason are the only cement which can bind men together, and all is wild whim where these two principles are wanting, which want of education however renders more scarce than is generally imagin'd. It must be own'd, says *Lactifer*, that education is the badge which distinguishes one man from another; but how few persons do we find endow'd with a talent to give a proper cast to the minds of youth; and may we not almost say that education exists only in its name?

Every one, says the Knight, has not occasion for the same sprightly education, nay few are susceptible of it; but there is a kind of general method of bringing up children, within the reach
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CONVERSATION II. 57

of every one's capacity. Have not all fathers (for example) a power of employing their children in some exercise proportion'd to their age, to give them an early habit of a sedentary and serious life. Have they not the liberty of putting into their hands books of piety, instead of loading their memories with fables and romances, proper only to infect the mind by corrupting the heart? Such was the custom of our fore-fathers. Yes, says *Lactifer*, but that custom is obsolete. How would a tutor be look'd upon in *England* was he to put a book of piety into the hands of his pupil! And how would you yourself be look'd upon here or elsewhere, if you should publicly advance such a tenet? I am sensible, says the Knight, I should draw upon me the censure of the polite world; but, if what I advance be true, all the oppositions of mankind cannot make it otherwise. I say more, I cannot attribute the depravity of manners so universal in this age, to any other cause than the impious obstinacy of not reading books of piety. In them every state may learn their obligations; and for want of being acquainted with them, all wander wide of the end they were created for. Was there ever disorder more hideous or fatal? But be that as it may, certain it is that nothing is more capable of giving a solid and serious turn to the education of youth, than the frequent lecture of devout books. There they learn to know their maker, and to form a just idea of him; and the love they thence imbibe for eternal truths gives them a distaste to the busying trifles, which make but too much the

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employment of men; in a word, the grandeur of sentiments they find there, is made insensibly their own; they become men indeed; for want of which the rest of mankind are but overgrown children. 'Tis hence therefore, in my opinion, that tutors ought to set out in the education of youth committed to their care.

'Tis easy to conceive, says *Lactifer*, that such nourriture cannot but contribute to a perfect health of mind, by instilling into the heart the pure sentiments of true religion and piety; and this, sir, I think is the first rule of conduct you lay down as a principle. But pray inform me what you understand by the second, which, if I remember, is reason.

I shall say nothing more of it, says the Knight, than that a man, who is desirous of possessing it, must learn to distinguish in himself what is passion, whim, and fancy, from what is conform to justice and good sense. I do not allow any man to be possesst of it 'till he is capable of accounting for all his actions, and giving a just motive for doing one thing and omitting another. If men were thus reasonable, they might avoid many wrong steps which hurry them down to disgrace. But, alas! man glories in the title of reasonable, without knowing what it means: a man of real sound reason is a kind of prodigy in the age we live in.

A merchant's son has scarce look'd about him a little, but he is immediately applied to learn the whole mystery of commerce, which is to be the sum total of his education; a very narrow one indeed! and for want of a better,
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what wonder can it be that he should fall into many essential errors in life; being either not at all, or but very superficially acquainted with religion, which requires a long and assiduous application. A gentleman has his son taught to ride, to fence, &c. 'tis right, his station requires him to know this; but so confined an education can never make him a man of probity. Hear but the discourse of such men, they excite compassion; sound them thoroughly and you will find them but children, who can be pleased with a rattle. How much are such men to be pitied for the want of better employment than that of wandering in search of means to kill time which hangs heavy upon them!

What displeases me most in such a situation, says *Lactifer*, is the necessity a man is in of going in quest of company to dissipate the sluggishness, which weighs him down. A person who knows a great deal, and can amuse himself agreeably and usefully alone, is as much to be envied, as they are to be pitied who cannot. Victims of their own passions and other people's humours, their life is one continued hurry. Are they as yet in a state of innocence? The inevitable converse of men will soon corrupt them. The melancholy necessity they lay themselves under of frequenting company, forces from them a thousand complaisant extravagancies; they lavish their praises on the greatest disorders, grow accustom'd by degrees to see and hear them spoken of; and soon after become accomplices in them. A book, a mathematical instrument, a pencil, a piece of music had been

60 CONVERSATION II.

innocent amusements for them; but education fails them, and they are put to a stand. Yet how can men who lead such a dissipated kind of life, and number their days by the guilt which has darken'd them, be so content as they appear to be?

Where is the man, says the Knight, more contented with his lot than one whose reason is subdued by liquor? The confused notions which actually amuse him, render him serene; the same confusion hinders him from seeing the piteous condition he is in, and he is disposed to believe no man more happy than himself. The case is the very same with the persons we are speaking of; dissipation bewilders them, and pleasures besot them; but there is this difference that the drunkenness of these leaves them when alone. If you eye them in this posture you will observe a settled melancholy on their countenance, and a certain absence in all their actions which betrays the mad man; they would willingly glance at themselves, but find nothing in the object inviting. There is a certain impression of truth stamp'd on us from our birth, which we cannot efface, and which, when we are silent and alone, spite of our repugnance to envisage it, rises to our view, and gives us to ourselves just as we are; and this picture, so opposite to the false and flattering one we draw of ourselves, is insupportable to us. Hence it is that men in such a situation, make dissipation the object of their pursuit. But what is it they really pursue? Nothing. 'Tis rather an escape from the sight of themselves. To such a wo-
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CONVERSATION II. 61

ful state are men reduced by the want of education, and it is to this defect chiefly we are to impute the disorders of all ages recorded in history. Religion was design'd to stem the too rapid torrent of our overflowing passions, it ought then to be known; reason was given us to render us in love with it, and to guide us to it, it ought therefore to be cultivated: without both principles a man is unworthy to exist.

You reason very justly, sir, says *Lactifer*, but according to your principle there are very few men upon earth; for if a small number may be found worthy that title, the generality of the world make them a subject of ridicule, and thus condemn what they ought to applaud. 'Tis very true, says the Knight; yet as self-love renders us incapable of esteeming any thing but what is like ourselves, there is no room to wonder that fools should laugh at wise men. This every age may furnish us with instances of; but I cannot think that such creatures are guided by sincerity. I am satisfied to the contrary that they secretly do justice to the merit of those they exteriorly condemn. Have there not been persons besotted enough to deny the being of God, and are there not still existing, wretches of the same stupid cast? They are indeed, if I may be allow'd to say so much, very stupid wretches for advancing such tenets; but do they think as they talk? I believe nothing of it. The former are displeased to see men whose prudent conduct is a reproach to their own licentious conduct; and the latter would, if possible, have
no

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no God, that they might get rid of the fear which haunts their consciences without cease; but let them endeavour on; their pleasures time will put an end to, truth shall eternally subsist.

This, says *Lactifer*, reminds me of a very singular history, which has a good deal of analogy with our present conversation.

A man of very great substance, but as great avarice, had two sons, whom he took care to have very well grounded in reading, writing, and accompts. The whole burden of his lectures to them was the misery of the times, and the exigence of œconomy; and he still concluded with assuring them that they could not fail of becoming very wise men, if they were careful to follow his advice. Death overtook the good man, and left his eldest son much richer than he expected to be. He thought no more of succeeding in the father's business but left the shop to his younger brother, and to add a feather to his cap, came from *Bristol* to *London* to buy a commission in the army. The younger brother was as phlegmatic in his temper, as the elder was hot and giddy. The hurry of business by no means agree'd with his love of peace and tranquillity; so that he resolved upon disposing of his stock, and taking to a life of ease and composure.

He consider'd some time what state of life might suit him best, but all his arithmetic was not able to furnish him with one means to please him. He search'd his father's closet for some book to help him in his choice, but he could lay his hand on none but *Webster* and
Hayes,

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Hayes, Hayes and Webster *; these and such like were the sum of his father's library: weak, very weak succours for a man, who has his state to chuse. He had heard talk of *Oxford*, and the learned men who resided there, and thought he could not do better than to go thither. He went, and was present at a public act; he ask'd what they were about; who was such a one, and who such another. He was answer'd in big words, Chancellor, University, Fellows, Faculty, Degrees, and what not; but conceived so little of what was told him, that he was scarce the better for asking. However he got himself introduced to the Vice-chancellor, in order to consult his advice, what state to make choice of. The Vice-chancellor found him very plain and unpolish'd, but in his very simplicity discover'd the marks of a strong and lively genius. He advis'd him therefore to apply to study, and to begin with the *Latin* tongue. The young man return'd to his inn very well satisfied with the Vice-chancellor; but happily for him, a stranger, who put up at the same inn, gave him much better advice. He perswaded him to proceed to *London* along with him, promising to bring him acquainted with men of real learning, who might be of great service to him, but that he by no means advis'd him to undertake, at his age, so tedious a task as the study of the *Latin* tongue, by following the methods which are never departed from in common schools; that being a very round about way, and consuming much more time than was really

* Authors on Trade and Accompts.

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really requisite. He accepted the offer, and in few days, they set out together.

When they got to town, a master was procured to methodize him in the study of sacred and profane history, and by way of relaxation he learn'd painting, music, and particularly geography, which he was advised to apply to very seriously, because without it there is no being a master of history. These studies took him up some years; after which, *Latin* and *Greek* were proposed to him; but money began to grow short with him. He open'd himself to his friend, who had brought him from *Oxford*, and in whose house he liv'd. He was a man of substance and letters, and had taken an extraordinary affection to our young man, because he found him of a very fertil genius and tractable temper; very necessary qualities to form an able man. He encouraged him greatly with promises, that nothing should fail; and that he would from time to time supply him with whatever necessaries he might want.

Our young man, who had an insatiable thirst after knowledge, and who now began to know the necessity of languages, felt an extreme pleasure in finding himself in the hands of a real friend; he return'd daily thanks to God for so great a blessing, persuaded that such a friend was a kind of phoenix among men. He undertook then the study of *Latin* and *Greek*, and became master of them in two years. 'Twas then he truly relish'd the sweets of study, by reading in the originals what he had conceived

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conceived but very imperfect notions of, from translations.

He soon gain'd a considerable reputation and the learned took as much pleasure in conversing with him as he reap'd benefit from their conversation. At length a nobleman made him an offer of entrusting with him the education of his son, and to engage him to accept it, propos'd to him a very handsome salary, with the farther promise of a genteel employment, as soon as his son should have ended his studies. The proposal appear'd to him very advantageous on many accounts, particularly because it would remove him from his friend's house, to whom he thought himself a charge; but he was greatly mistaken, his friend had farther designs in view for him, which he had not yet let him into.

This friend, acquainted with the offer made to our young man, us'd all his eloquence to dissuade him from accepting an employ, which would infallibly hinder the pursuit of his studies. He represented to him, that indeed it was not at all beneath him to be tutor to an Earl's son, and that he was charm'd to see so much justice done to his merit; but that as he was qualify'd for something better, he could not but dissuade him from charging himself with a child, who would make him lose a great deal of time; that nevertheless he was sensible, that to educate a youth born to be one day a Peer of *England*, too much care could not be taken in the choice of an able tutor, yet there were many persons in *London* qualified for that poste, whose studies were

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were wholly busy'd in that sphere; but as for him, who was capable of yet greater improvement in the sciences he had hitherto studied, he would by no means advise him to neglect the talents God had bestow'd upon him. Our young man thought himself under an obligation of submitting to the counsel of his friend, and, returning the nobleman thanks for the honour of his offer, betook himself wholly to his closet. His friend had him enter'd in the *Temple*, and in a very short time brought him to the bar, notwithstanding his youth.

Merit was now all the wealth of our young counsellor, for the little substance his father had left him, at his decease, was expended in gaining an education. It was now proper for him to settle, yet he neither knew where to take a house, nor even how to furnish one; but he was agreeably surpris'd when an unknown person came to make him at once the offer of a noble apartment at his own house, a choice library, his purse, and his daughter in marriage. Great was the joy this proposal gave him, and I believe his joy had been extreme, if marriage had not made a part of the offer: but the yoke sometimes sweet, though more often insupportable, seem'd inevitable to him in his present poor situation. He return'd the stranger thanks with all the good breeding he was master of, promising to wait on him the next day, to pay him his respects at his own house, and he kept his word.

You may guess, sir, that the young lady made her appearance with all the gaiety she could put on.

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on. He found her of a very graceful address, young, beautiful, and sprightly, with a very fertile genius: In a word he liked her excessively, but had not the good fortune to be as agreeable in the eye of this young beauty; a brisk spark was more to her taste.

He no sooner return'd home than he went to his friend's closet to communicate to him the advantageous match which was proposed to him. He set forth with all his eloquence the charms of the young lady with whom he seem'd to be very much taken; but this was not very pleasing to his friend, who had another design in his head; which was to marry him to his own sister; but this he conceal'd for the present. He politely congratulated him on so advantageous a proposal. Well, sir, said he, you will allow, I believe, that the like good fortune would not probably have attended you at *Oxford*, if you had tarried there. How happy is a man when he is possess'd of merit, and lives in a place where people know how to discern it? But, added he, have you yet communicated this good news to my sister? No, says our young counsellor, I thought myself obliged to speak of it first to you. I know how much I am indebted to you, the favours you have heap'd upon me are always present in my mind; and if my obligations are infinite, my gratitude knows no bounds. Talk not of gratitude, says his friend, a man is but too happy, who has it in his power to do good to others; and the good he does is repaid with interest, when he sees his good offices have had their desired effect,
and

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and that nothing is thrown away. 'Tis of myself, sir, I speak, having contributed to my utmost to make you what you are, I have made you the object of my felicity, and my whole subject of glory. But let us go see my sister, and acquaint her with the fortune your merit has procured you.

The sister received very coldly the news they brought her, and seem'd very indifferent to it. However she could not refrain saying, that she thought the woman must be very happy, who was destin'd to be the wife of so great a man. Fair lady, said he, my happiness would be rais'd to the summit of my wishes, if the lady, who is offer'd to me was as perfect as yourself. But I need not tell you, that, in the age we live in, merit is of very little weight, and wealthy ignorance is a stronger magnetic than the most finish'd desert. What, sir, said she, and would you then be one of the mistaken multitude? No, fair lady, heaven forbid! But I fear a lady of your accomplishments would look with but a very indifferent eye upon a man, whom too great an attachment to the cabinet has kept a stranger to gallantry; merit has little to do in love, and my want of fortune is a defect I cannot but be sensible of. You injure me, said she; the education I have receiv'd has rais'd my soul to a more exalted way of thinking, than, I find, you believe it has. Do you imagine, sir, because I am a woman, and young, I cannot discern a real good from the chimeric appearance of one? Do we see many rich persons happy; rather does not wretchedness every where

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where haunt them? The rich are never without enemies, their pleasures are ever embitter'd with some chagrine; envied by fools, and disregarded by men of sense, what felicity can they enjoy? 'Tis not thus with a man of real merit, peace always reigns within him, virtue always attends him, he has the art of setting bounds to his passions and stifling in himself whatever might make him like the common herd of men; in a word, sir, a girl of sense, who designs to marry, may justly envy a rival the possession of such a man, because she will easily perceive that such a man guided only by reason, is capable of making her sovereignly happy. These are my sentiments, sir, and if I had thoughts of marrying; a man even of your perfections would scarce have power enough to please me.

So noble a haughtiness charm'd excessively, and at the same time piqued our young counsellor. I know, fair lady, said he, that educated as you have been with so much attention, the glorious sentiments you express cannot but be natural to you; but you acquaint me with nothing new in telling me that a man like me could not have power to please you. I never have had the temerity to hope for it, and I know there are men in *Paris* more worthy to possess you. If you esteem the wife happy, whom it shall please Providence to give me; I cannot but think the man who is born to possess you, the happiest of mortals.

Why are you both so piqued, said the brother? For my part, I look on you both to be capable of compleating each other's felicity.

But

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But it is time to withdraw; I make no doubt, sir, but that you will give time to reflection, before you fix your choice; and you, sister, I leave to the serious considerations you are so capable of.

Our young counsellor was extremely puzzled with this discourse. He knew not what to resolve on, and thought it dangerous to come to any determination without the advice of his friend, to whom he owed his being what he was. He went to him in his closet the next morning, and made him a frank discovery of the perplexity he was in, and his reasons for being bent upon doing nothing without his advice. I could, said he, give others a certain advice, but the education which, by your help, I have received, has taught me to be dubious enough of myself never to resolve on any thing which regards my own happiness without the direction of a true and sincere friend.

I am too much interested in this affair myself, says the friend, to be able to give you any advice, but what must be suspect. I would willingly be your brother in law, and yet I do not pretend to force your inclinations. A wife is for life, her company is very long and tedious if disagreeable, and very short if she is lovely. The choice is for yourself, sir, and I should be quite inconsolable, if after following my advice, I should see you unhappy.

I take you, sir, says the counsellor, and now can no longer hesitate in my choice, after what you have been pleased to say. I should never have presumed to ask the lady your sister

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in marriage; but since you condescend to propose her to me, I look upon it as a duty, I have the greatest interest in, to accept, with utmost gratitude and thanks, the honour you are pleased to confer upon me. In a word, the alliance was concluded, and nothing was now talk'd of in the house but of fixing a day for the wedding.

In the mean time the young lady, first proposed to him, to whom he had paid a visit, had not fail'd to represent to her father that the great composure of our young counsellor was very unsuitable to her tender age. The complaisant father therefore introduced to her a brisk young gallant, well made, polite, and courteous, one in a word possess'd with all those accomplishments which the unthinking part of mankind call perfections. But the young lady had been extremely well brought up, and her education, on this occasion, help'd her at once to discern the real from the imaginary, and she could not forbear telling her father, that this pretty prater was nothing better than a retailer of sonnets, a mere *Don Quixote*, and more capable of infecting the hearts, than improving the understanding of those he conversed with. In short she concluded that our young counsellor with all his gravity had given her more pleasure in a minute than the other in four hours conversation. The father was charm'd with this confession, and used no delay in endeavouring to cultivate the counsellor's good graces; but was extremely surprized when he heard him say, he was under a pre-engagement;

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a melancholy piece of news to bring to his daughter.

It was not without a good deal of concern she heard it, and she could not but conceive a secret jealousy of the happy lady destin'd for him. She reproach'd herself a thousand times with having listen'd too attentively to the precipitate suggestions of juvenil warmth, and not given our young counsellor the reception his merit demanded. However she did not intirely give him up for lost, but made use of every means to see him again, and succeeded. She fail'd not to wish him joy of his future lady, and took a great deal of pains to set forth her accomplishments, telling him at the same time, that if he was blest in the gift of such a wife, the lady's blessing would be equally great in the possession of him for a husband. In marrying this lady, said he, I do not so much consider her merit. I know indeed, fair lady, that her worth is above that of the common sphere of women. But still duty is my chief bias. I owe all to her, and therefore give myself all to her. Ah, sir, said she, how cold an alliance must that be which has gratitude for it's only principle. 'Tis a great matter to possess gratitude, says he, and greater still to act in consequence of it. But, sir, said she, would you then be deem'd an ingrate if you should not marry her? No, madam, but my gratitude could not be perfect as it ought to be. Besides what risk do I run in marrying her? she is compleatly deserving, what more can be wish'd? Youth then and beauty, sir, have no charms with you? Whatever

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Whatever is beautiful, fair lady, cannot but charm me; yet reason sometimes demands the upper hand of inclination: we should be too happy if every circumstance were favourable to our wishes; whereas we are not always sure even of pleasing the persons who are most pleasing to us. I cannot yet say, whether or not I have had the talent to please my friend's sister; however I am so well acquainted with my own heart, that, was I but absolute master of my own destiny, I know where I would bestow the apple.

He needed say no more to make the young lady think a great deal. She went to her father, and told him that she had had a visit from the young counsellor, in whom she found an extraordinary genius, but that decorum laid him under an engagement which he would not be able to rid himself of without very great difficulty. Be under no concern, child, says the father, we may, I do not doubt, find some means or other to set him free. But the good man was not acquainted with the honour of our counsellor, which prevail'd with him over all other considerations.

His brother the captain died, and left him sole heir to all his estate, 'twas then he made it a point of honour and generosity to make his friend a tender of all his fortune, as the least return he owed to so many favours as he had received. His friend charm'd with this conduct, found he was not deceived in the choice he had made for his sister, and therefore reminded him of his promise, which he fulfil'd without waver-

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ing, and was married to the lady. This act of generosity had such an effect on the mind of the other lady, that she cultivated a strict friendship with the new married couple. Never was harmony more perfect. All the parties made appear what noble advantages flow to the mind and heart from a compleat education.

These heroic passages are exceedingly beautiful, says the Knight. A certain greatness of soul appears in every part of your narration, corruption is every where banish'd, and no weakness, or but very little, to be discover'd in any circumstance of it. Oh that I had but loved *Sophia* with like discretion! Perhaps, sir, says *Lactifer*, your former foible may prove of future advantage to you, as it has brought you acquainted with yourself, and the knowledge you have thence gain'd of your own weakness will make you more diffident of your strength. For I look upon nothing to be so weak as a man who is stranger to his own foibles. Alas, said he, I know them but too well now, and they are all I can see in me. Sir, says *Lactifer*, you are just what I could wish to find every man of learning. For what is more insufferable than letter'd pride, which makes it's possessors think beneath them, to yield to any. Your young counsellor was not of this character, says the Knight, he was not swoln with his knowledge; affability and good-breeding seem born with him; and is not such what we call the truly amiable man? And indeed it appears, from your story, that the world is just to such men wherever they appear. Yes, sir, says *Lactifer*, in a
city

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city like *London*, where learning, good-breeding, and affability are essentially requisite to recommend a man to public esteem, these qualities will always be sure to meet with due deference; but what chance, think you, do they stand in countries, where good-breeding passes for folly, and an affable man for a weak one? But such are unworthy to make the subject of our amusement, and therefore let us drop them. As I hope, sir, you will continue me the favour I now enjoy, I shall take my leave at present, to return hither with double satisfaction. You are too good, sir, says the Knight. However since our converse affords us mutual pleasure, let us reap the benefit of it, while we remain at the *Hague*. Thus they parted to meet again the next day, in the same place, where they held the conversation which makes the subject of their third interview.

End of the second conversation.



CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

Third CONVERSATION.

LACTIFER was not so punctual to the hour of appointment as the Knight, and was very much surprized, at his approach, to find the Knight sitting in a very grave and thoughtful posture. Ah, sir, said he, what accident has thrown you into this pensiveness? I was thinking, says the Knight, of our yesterday's conversation on the advantages which would accrue to human society, was more care taken of the education of youth. And yet when I consider how few there are upon whom a good education would be well bestow'd, I know not what to think. For how few men are there really in the world susceptible of truth! 'Tis in vain to sow any thing in uncultivated ground, and that which appears the best cultivated is not always the more fruitful for being so, or the
feed

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seed sown in it, the less lost: in short it is often as barren as that which is cover'd over with salt. A certain proof of evil without remedy is the present gross state of pravity, which renders men insensible to all that which shou'd concern them most, and attentive only to seeking with eagerness what cannot but tend to their destruction. Let us begin with what relates to reason, and I dare flatter myself you will be of one opinion with me.

No one can doubt but all men feel a real desire of becoming happy; but the means used, by great and little, in every action tending to this purpose, demonstrate, that they ramble wide of the way which leads to it. Like the ancient philosophers, they only betray to us the feebleness and fallacy of the system they form of it to themselves, and how distant they are from truth, which alone can guide us to it. The most refined pleasures are but fleeting, and the void they leave behind them in our hearts, convinces us, that we are not to be satisfied with such trifles. 'Tis true indeed, the slender satisfaction they afford, in the present minute, creates an earnestness for the means to reiterate them; and life loiters on in a perpetual vicissitude, which only teaches us that all is borne away by a torrent, and that a rapid succession of hasty moments carries all before it, without leaving in our souls the least track of felicity.

I understand you perfectly, says *Lactifer*, that it is as impossible for the soul to retain the pleasures it enjoys, as it is for the arms to hold the water they embrace; because neither pleasures

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nor liquids, if I may be indulged the comparison, have any relation of contiguity in their parts, and therefore those are as incapable of being link'd to the soul, as these of being lock'd in the arms. But to return from this metaphysical way of reasoning, we need but, to prove your assertion, give a man back to himself to make him own that nothing has yet satisfied him, and that all which his past pleasures have left him in possession of, is the regret of not having shun'd them.

It is very true, says the Knight; but do not you think, that naturally speaking, man ought to be very happy amidst an abundance of pleasure? For what can have a greater conformity than there ought to be between the creatures and man for whom they were made?

Ah, sir, says *Lactifer*, you have a mind to surprise me, but I am not insensible that man not being made for the creature, it was only given him to make use of; that he cannot without a crime enjoy it; and that he ought to fix on a more worthy object the unlimited desires of a heart which limited creatures cannot satiate. In a word nothing appears to me more unworthy the dignity of man than to swerve from this truth to give himself blindly up to passions which deceive him.

Do not rail so much against the passions, says the Knight; without them we should not wish to be happy, and we should scarce give ourselves the trouble to seek the means to be so. Wou'd you then, says *Lactifer*, have me speak well of the source of all our wretchedness? I presume,
says

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says the Knight, you wou'd be for suppressing them, if you had the power in your hands; in such case you wou'd be very much to be pitied; a soul without passions wou'd very near dwindle the man into brute. But whence all this animosity against the passions? if your tongue were to elapse into untruths, slander, calumny, wou'd you therefore cut it out? A slanderer without a tongue wou'd still continue to prove such; for thought has many instruments beside the tongue: So that properly speaking 'tis not the tongue that slanders: it but manifests, by discourse, the infected will of the slanderer, and the poison that is lodged in his heart. It is not then the fault of the tongue, but the corruption of him who sets it in action, which you are to blame; it is he who deserves the punishment for applying it to a quite other use than it was given him for. Thus it is too with the passions, God gave them to us, they must then be good: Love, hatred, anger, or any of the passions cannot be bad, if we but apply them to the use for which they were designed. There is a virtuous love, a virtuous hatred, a virtuous anger, because they have only in view the object they ought ever to propose to themselves; but their virtue degenerates into vice from the moment they tend to any object as corrupt as the spring which gives them motion.

I take you right, sir, says *Lactifer*, the passions have nothing bad in themselves: they are criminal only by accident, that is, because we are depraved. But is not that pravity inevitable, since we are born with it?

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Undoubtedly it is, says the Knight, but we are equally born with reason, and which ought to prevail? Every one wou'd blush not to give reason the preference; reason then ought to regulate our passions, and we to take it for our guide. Now the desire of happiness is a passion born with us, and if reason directs us to search after it, it does not tell us that the creature can be the object of it, because nothing perishable can make us happy. Does avarice conduce us to riches; we no sooner possess them, than the pain, we are obliged to take to preserve them, throws us into a sollicitude which widens us of felicity: do we hire others to take care of them; we become dependent on our hirelings, exposed to their caprices, and doubtful of their fidelity: and is a state of slavery compatible with happiness? At last, in the very moment of time perhaps, when we are in the greatest tranquillity, these riches forsake us, or we them; and reason tells us that the void we then find ourselves in, must be so much the more terrible, as it is attended with the eternal privation of the object of our love. In such a sad situation are we left by what avarice pointed out to us as the object of our bliss; and such the fruits of all the labour we have undergone in pursuit of the means.

Let us examin attentively an infant; he seeks, like full-grown men, the possession of happiness; and one wou'd be apt to imagine his innocence and simplicity worthy some success. An object strikes his fancy, he roars to obtain it, and all his little ways speak such an eagerness for the posses-

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possession of this object, that one would almost expect to see him happy with it; but no sooner has he obtain'd, than he demonstrates, by relinquishing it, that he is in some measure sensible of his being form'd for a nobler object, and that the creature is beneath his enjoyment. What difference do you make between this infant and a man of riper years; both pursue the same end, and neither takes reason for his guide. The former is not yet come to the use of it, and the latter blushes not to use it as little as an infant; because accusom'd to make use only of his senses, he believes nothing certain but what they offer to him: The greatest part of mankind, acting in the same manner, confirm him in his error, and he looks on a man, who knows how to make use of reason, as a philosopher, whom all shou'd admire, but none are capable of imitating. Yet what in reality is this philosopher more than a man who acts the man; while the others, if I may venture to say it, are but mere *Automata*, or moving statues, which sensible objects set more or less o' going, according to the disposition of their organs.

Do you think then, sir, says *Laclifer*, that a man who listens only to reason, is more happy than others? Is there not an infelicity attach'd to life which no one can exempt himself from; and if it is inevitable, what happiness can flatter the most reasonable man living?

I agree with you, sir, says the Knight, that all men are condemn'd to bear a painful load of misery in this life; but the man, who eagerly pursues the enjoyment of the creature, is so much the

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more burden'd with this misery as he every minute feels the loss of what seem'd to make his felicity; while he whose ears are open only to reason, not having made the creature his God, enjoys serenity amidst the severest pressure of affliction. The former is always overcome by the troubles of life, the latter ever victorious over them. This is not that problematic kind of reasoning which is equally easy to argue for, and against. Nothing more evident to good sense, nothing more plain and familiar to experience.

Is it not true, sir, that always desiring, and never enjoying, is what makes mankind unhappy? Is it not equally true, that to taste for a moment what we have long sigh'd after, and to see ourselves deprived of it in the same instant, is the severest of miseries? For if the satisfaction of our desires is what alone can make us easy, on the contrary the privation of it must make us extremely wretched; because the beloved object vanishes from us like a shadow, and leaves us only the desire of it augmented by privation. Such is the piteous condition of men, who, led by their corrupt hearts, seek just what reason bids them avoid.

The ambitious man, raised to the summit of grandeur, is tickled, and tickles himself with the flattering marks of respect he receives from mankind. Is he content at present; who knows how soon he may become the most wretched of mankind? *Mordecai* refused to bow to *Haman*; and this haughty courtier, basking but yesterday in the delightful sun-shine of gratified ambition, to day

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day is gloomily lost in the darkest despair.

The man of pleasure, intoxicated with variety of delight, deems himself happy, every thing appears gay to him, and nothing seems wanting to his wishes; yet how soon shall his rest be ruffled? A little field in the possession of another seems to him the sole thing he wants, to compleat his happiness; but it is not his: this discomposes him, he is not himself, he is eaten up with envy, and in a word, is no longer happy. *Naboth* refuses his vineyard to *Achab*, and this Prince is so devour-ed with discontent, as to become the most wretched of his species.

This the fatal fickleness of their situation, who instead of following the dictates of reason, tread the paths their passions point out, of which they are incapable of making any tolerable use. It is quite otherwise with a man truly rational: He knows the creature too well to fix his affections to it, he knows it's vanity, is apprised of it's weakness, and is perfectly sensible, that to build happiness upon it, is like leaning on a reed, which slides thro' the fingers, and bending gives the leaner a fall. Free from inordinate desires, he knows how to make a right use of the creature, but cannot be concern'd at the loss of it, because his heart is never attach'd to it.

I am convinced, says *Lactifer*, that such a man is much less unhappy than others; but is he exempt from an infinity of calamities common to the whole species? No, says the Knight, but he knows how to bear them, and it is this which makes his felicity on the hither side the grave. Like others he yearns after happiness, but persuad-

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ed that nothing on earth can satiate his desires, he adheres to the Supreme Being which he thinks alone worthy of him, as being only perfect. His heart being made for love, and void of what is created, that great uncreated Being possesses it intire. In all things, and every where, he beholds this infinite object, his will is directed by it, and the love of it alone operates all, and is the spring of all he does. What happiness can be greater, sir, than to love and be reciprocally beloved, without fearing lest time shou'd rob us of the object of our love, as it does of all that is created. What more compleat felicity can man enjoy than to possess this immense object in his soul, to speak to him as a friend, and to a friend, and to feel his all-beneficent hand wiping off the tears of affliction in time of trial. The loss of fortune, parents, friends, nothing can disconcert him, and the comfort he inwardly feels amidst the greatest pains, is infinitely superior to all the chagrines inseparable from his mortal state.

This, sir, is the happy state to which reason conducts the man who takes it for a guide; it is plain then that the generality of mankind are unhappy, because for want of being acquainted with it, they pursue quite opposite measures, by listening to their passions, which they know not how to make use of. This I hope to convince you of, sir, if you continue me the honour of your company some days longer.

I shou'd be too great a loser, sir, says *Lactifer*, if I fail'd an appointment so greatly advantageous to me. I shall never forget these walks,

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walks, where I have had the honour of your acquaintance; and so extraordinary a gentleman as yourself cou'd alone make me conceive some love for a city, which on every other account merits the utmost indifference from men of any sense. However it must be own'd, that among the meereft barbarians there are always some persons to be met with who are possess'd of humanity and good-breeding. I was myself this morning with one, who, out of goodness, has given reception to a young lady, whose history I think very singular, and not a little analogous to the beautiful things you have been saying: and therefore, with your indulgence, I will relate it to you.

A young man, whose father was a gentleman of *Cheshire*, left home to settle in *London*, contrary to his father's pleasure. He had a very rich uncle however, who approved of his going, and furnish'd him with a considerable sum of money, promising to supply him on, with every thing suitable to the handsome equipage he had already provided him.

The youth, being of birth and spirit and well supplied with money, soon made a large acquaintance in *London*, and his good-breeding and conduct gain'd him some powerful friends, friends who proved of the utmost service to him in the accident which soon after befel him.

His uncle died suddenly, without making any will, and the money he had given him was soon spent; so that finding himself unprovided with means to obtain any more, he was forced to recur to his friends; who, when he related

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related to them his misfortune, were extremely touch'd with it. They look'd out very diligently for some employ for him, but the poor young gentleman being little acquainted with affairs, it was no easy matter to find one which wou'd suit him. As he was of a tender and peaceable constitution nothing seem'd more proper for him than a commission in the standing-army; but as it required some time to make interest, and in the mean while he must live, he took up at last with serving a nobleman in the quality of a steward. He was not indeed over expert in the service, but being the chief of the servants, his post properly required only that he shou'd overlook the rest.

He made a pretty fortune under this nobleman, and thought of sharing it with a girl he had pitch'd upon for a wife. In fact he married her and had two children by her, a boy and a girl. It may be said that these two children were the admiration of the town, they were so beautiful, graceful, and virtuous, shining with a sprightly and penetrating genius which charm'd every body. They were yet very young when their mother died, and, unhappily for them, their father married a second wife who was the author of all their misfortunes.

As soon as this second wife had a child, the father's love changed object. The children of the first bed had no more share in his tenderness, and he had so little regard for them as to sacrifice them to the mother-in-law's hatred by putting them out o' doors. The boy he put out to a scrivener, and the child guess'd from
the

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the agreement he heard made between the master and his father, that he shou'd not be happy: little *Fanny* his sister was sent to a country boarding-school.

Tho' they were extremely ill-treated at home by their mother-in-law, it was not without a great deal of pain that they left it, because they perceived this exile to be the effect of a hatred they had not deserved. But what was the most grievous to them was the necessity of separating. The poor infants embraced each other, with a flood of tears, and unable to utter a last farewell to one another, they took leave only with signs. They had been a mutual comfort one to the other, and now by their separation saw themselves deprived of that only one.

Their mother-in-law, triumphing in her injustice, thought herself quite happy in seeing no more her husband's children at home; but heaven soon chastised her with the loss of the child she loved the most. But she was not yet so unhappy as she was afterwards, and the two children of her husband's first wife became the instruments of her punishment, their discretion and virtue being incessant reproaches to her of her hatred and injustice.

In fact *Fanny* was the admiration of the boarding-school where she was, and of all the ladies, who came thither: there was not a woman of the first distinction, who heard of her, but wou'd see her. Her brother on his side learn'd to write so well that he excell'd his master; so that having nothing more to learn there, his father took him home again to save expences.

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expences. You may guess how glad the mother-in-law was to see him. There was no ill treatment the poor youth did not endure, and what is wonderful, he bore it all with a patience which has few examples, at so tender an age, he was then but twelve years old.

Little *Fanny* having heard that her brother was come home, and knowing that the Duchess of ***** was then at the boarding-school on a visit to her niece, she contrived to be seen by her; the Duchess call'd her to her, and that was what she wanted. Well, *Fanny*, says the Duchess, will you go to *London* with me? Ah, madam, said she sighing, I wish I might say, yes, without being blamed, I would say it with all my heart. By your manner of speaking, my dear, says the Duchess, you seem not to be contented here. I should be unjust to complain, says *Fanny*; but—— At these words the tears trickled down her tender cheeks, and she retired. The Duchess of ***** look'd at the mistress; What can be the matter with this child? said she: There is something very extraordinary in her behaviour; it is not natural, to see so young a creature mistress of so much reflexion. Do not wonder, madam, said the mistress, she gives us daily proofs of the goodness of her heart, and the brightness of her understanding; but the poor child is born to be wretched; though I wish I may not be a prophetess.

I will endeavour to prevent it, says the Duchess; but I want to know the cause of her tears; I beg therefore, you would call her, and
leave

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leave her alone with me. The mistress withdrew, and sent *Fanny*, who appear'd again before the Duchess, but with an air of constancy and resolution which appear'd above the tears she had shed.

Fanny, says the Duchess, why did you leave me in so hasty and abrupt a manner? Ah, madam, what I had the honour to tell you, too plainly discovers that I would not willingly leave you so soon; but the rebel tears which obstinately forced their way down my cheeks, obliged me to retire, that I might not be wanting in the respect that is due to you. I hope, madam, the tenderness of my age will serve as an apology for it's weakness, and plead my pardon. Yes, *Fanny*, says the ravish'd Duchess, I pardon you; but upon condition that you tell me the cause. With all my heart, madam, says *Fanny*, and I hope, you will have compassion on my misfortunes.

She told her all which she and her brother had suffer'd since her father's second marriage, and how perfect a love and union was between both; and when she came to her brother's return home, I am sure, said she, he will be loaded with ill usage. And must I, madam, who am all the comfort he has, remain here in peace, and not share with him his ill treatment, and sufferings? Go, says the Duchess, you are too rich in merit; well, make yourself easy, for I vow you shall go with me to *London*.

Accordingly she took her along with her, and put her into the hands of her mother-in-law, and gave her very extraordinary commendations
of

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of her: But she no sooner turn'd her back than *Fanny* felt the severe effects of her step-mother's resentment; but she made no complaint, they being nothing more than she had expected. The greatest of her griefs was the never seeing her brother, whom she continually enquired after, and who was still kept out of her sight. But the maid at length, touch'd with *Fanny's* tenderness, told her he was lock'd up in a cellar, where he was fed upon bread and water, without having done any thing to deserve such severity. Does my father know it, says *Fanny*? no, says the maid, whenever he comes to the house, your mother pretends she has sent him on some message or other; and your father enquires no farther.

Young *Fanny* delay'd not going to see her brother, who intreated her not to expose herself any more to their step-mother's fury, for his sake. I came home, said she, with no other view than to put a remedy to your evils, or to comfort you amidst them, and therefore I have no dangers to fear: GOD, the father of orphans, will stand by me. I will go to my father, and acquaint him with your sufferings; perhaps, he may lend me a favourable ear. Ah, dearest sister, do not you know him better yet? He thinks no more of us, than if we were not his children. No matter, says *Fanny*, at least I shall have done my duty.

In reality she did as she said; her father seem'd to melt at her discourse, and talk'd to his wife upon it with a great deal of severity; but as he was seldom at home, what ought to have contributed

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tributed to make these poor children less miserable, but served to augment their wretchedness. *Fanny* was excessively abused, and turn'd out of doors at eight o' clock at night.

She was then thirteen, and was very sensible to what dangers she was exposed in the streets of *London*. She would have had recourse to the Duchess of * * * *, but she neither knew the house, nor the street where she lived, and was afraid and ashamed to enquire. At last she pass'd by an old ruinous house, and perceiving a part she could get in at, she retired thither, where she kept herself conceal'd all night, but her apprehensions, join'd to the incommode-ness of the place, prevented her sleeping or resting. The next morning she went into the first church she saw open, and no sooner sat down, than overpowered with the fatigue of the preceding night, she fell asleep.

A youth, whom you will find by the sequel, to be a young man of virtue and merit, came into the same church, and found her dosing. He look'd stedfastly on her, and thought the sight very singular. She was very prettily drest, but her beauty made a much stronger impression on the mind of our young gentleman. He drew near, and waked her, with saying, that the church was not a place to sleep in. I know it, sir, answers *Fanny*, but I am overpowered, and God will forgive me. Has any misfortune then happen'd to you, miss? tell me: I have a good deal of credit in *London*, and I feel a strong propension to do you service. I thank you, sir, said she, I have a father who is all good, and
from

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from whom I hope all. 'Tis he that helps me to endure all my sufferings, and I am willing to endure them as long as he pleases. But then, miss, does this all good father forbid procuring assistance? No. I conjure you therefore in the name of this same bountiful father not to conceal your misfortunes from me; and I swear to you that I will do my utmost to procure you the most possible speedy remedy to them. She would by no means consent to it, and the young gentleman modestly forbearing to press her too much, withdrew.

Afflicted *Fanny* pass'd the whole day in walking about *London*, but without knowing where she was, or whither she was going, perpetually conning over her misfortune, but with utmost patience and resignation. The night came on, and she went to pass it in the same place where she had pass'd the preceding one, thinking That the safest place, as it was a little remote from the more public streets; and return'd the next morning to the same church she went into before.

The young gentleman we have spoken of, return'd again to the church about the same hour as he had been there the day before, and found *Fanny* again in the same place asleep, but very different from what he beheld her the preceding day. The poor child had eaten nothing for two days; it is no wonder therefore that he should find her pale, wan, and disfigured. He waked her again, and ask'd the cause of this change; she own'd to him that she had been fasting for some time, and began to be sensible of a considerable loss of strength, which she told him with

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with so much courage and unshaken constancy, that the young gentleman was more captivated than ever.

'Tis unworthy a man of honour, miss, said he, to suffer you any longer to remain in the distress you are in; and since you do not think proper to honour me with making me a confidant in your misfortunes, permit me at least, to take a coach and conduct you to my sister's, where you will be in safety, and want for nothing. Do you know, lovely lady, the danger you are in? Yes, sir, says *Fanny*, but as I have not exposed myself to it o' my own head, I hope God will be my guardian. I return you thanks, sir, for your obliging offer, and wish I could accept it with any decency, but I cannot. Accept, at least, says the young gentleman, a trifle towards your support: Saying this, he would fain have prest her to take a couple of guineas, which she absolutely refused.

When the young gentleman was gone, an elderly lady, who had observed at a distance what had pass'd, came up to the child and commended her for having refused the young gentleman's money. *Fanny* told her the affliction she was under, and the lady offer'd to take her home to her step-mother, but she had very good reasons not to agree to it. The lady however intreated her to accept a small matter of money, which with some difficulty she yielded to.

She pass'd the rest of the day in prying about her father's door, 'till she got an opportunity of speaking to the servant, of whom she ask'd if Mr. * * * was return'd to town. Yes, says the maid,

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maid, and he has several times enquired after you. This was a banker who lived in the same house as her step-mother, and who had all the regard for *Fanny*, she really deserved. She desired the maid to go secretly to him, and to tell him, that she wanted to speak to him. He had her immediately convey'd into his apartment, without any one's perceiving it, and *Fanny* told him her whole story.

The banker was not surpris'd at the cruelty of *Fanny's* mother-in-law, knowing the cause of it. He had a brother who was distractedly in love with the woman, and was not hated by her. This brother look'd upon *Fanny* as a spy upon their conduct, and to be more at liberty, had caused the child to be turn'd out of doors.

No sooner the step-mother knew of *Fanny's* being with the banker, than she put on the air of a vestal, went to him, and told him with some heat, that she could not comprehend his behaviour, nor what he could mean by keeping a young girl conceal'd in his apartment; that she insisted upon having her away with her that instant, and would no longer tolerate a disorder which she could not wink at without dishonour. The banker had a fine game to play with her, but was contented to tell her, that knowing his brother to be the cause of the ill treatment *Fanny* received, he requested her to assure him that the good or bad usage *Fanny* met with should be the rule of his manner of dealing with him, who must know himself to be entirely dependent on his bounty. The step-mother promised a milder behaviour towards

Fanny,

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Fanny, and took care to be as good as her word, for fear of losing her galant, or seeing him punish'd.

Fanny was now at rest; but her tranquillity was not of long standing. The step-mother persuaded her husband to rid himself of his children; that she had an advantageous prospect for the boy; that the Commadore of the fleet at *Spithead* wanted a secretary. She found no difficulty in gaining her husband's consent, and the youth, who saw plainly he was design'd a sacrifice, acquiesced, and taking leave of his dear sister; I don't doubt, says he, dearest *Fanny*, but you will be as cruelly treated; yet take courage and patience, place all your confidence in the Divine bounty, and remember that you are a maiden. After this he set out on a sudden, without taking leave of his father or mother-in-law, intending thereby to give them to understand, that he had no room to be pleased with the sufferings they had made him endure.

During this interval, the young gentleman who had seen *Fanny* in the church, had made diligent enquiries after her, to find out the place of her abode. When he was inform'd of it, and of the family of her father, he ask'd her in marriage of her parents; who without much enquiring what he was, or how suitable a match for the girl, they gave their consent to the marriage. The step-mother was charm'd with the opportunity of being free'd from the company of a child, whose discreet conduct was a constant reproach to the depravity of her own manners. The young gentleman had free access

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cess to *Fanny*, and enjoy'd the innocent pleasure of entertaining his future bride without any restraint.

He was extremely overjoy'd to find he was not deceived in the opinion he first entertain'd of her. He declared to her that his resolution had long been never to marry; but that her misfortunes and her virtue, heighten'd by distress, had so affected him as to determin him to ask her in marriage, more for her sake, and to rescue her from the state of violence and danger she was in, than out of any of those motives which generally engage the giddy world to marry. I know, answer'd *Fanny*, how much my sufferings expos'd me, and therefore, as you seem to be as sensible of it as I am, I do not wonder at what you say, but rather at finding a man of your virtuous sentiments in so vicious an age. How many men, seeing my situation, would have used their utmost efforts to seduce me! I am then perfectly persuaded, sir, that I am under great obligations to you, not more on account of the good you mean to do me than of the harm you never attempted. I may thence perhaps be less unworthy of you than I otherwise should have been: But be that as it may, I shall deem myself as happy and as much to be envied as I now deserve pity, if ever I have the joy to see our hearts as perfectly of accord as our sentiments are. But so great a felicity was not design'd for *Fanny*; the poor girl was made but for shedding tears.

In fact all was in readiness for the wedding, and the day fix'd upon, when a letter obliged the

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the young lover to set out for *Hampton-Court*; and that it might be no cause of delay, he set out in the night, in order to return the next day to *London*, which was the occasion of his catastrophe. His horse fell, and he broke his leg in two places. It was some time before he could get any help, his wounds mortified, and he died in a very short time.

They knew not well how to acquaint *Fanny* with the dismal news; but she soon perceived that some misfortune had happen'd. Conceal nothing from me, said she: I am prepared for the worst of evils which can befall me. Your lover is dead, says somebody. Well, said she, with some tears of tenderness in her eyes, what is there extraordinary in this to shock me? *Fanny* still hopes to be happy, but it is when she too shall be dead.

Such an instance of uncommon constancy was new matter of rage and jealousy to the step-mother; and she extremely regretted the accident, as it had broken off a match by which she hoped to have ridded herself of the child. Amidst the excess of her grief she imagin'd she might be able to find some relief, by applying to a fortune-teller. Accordingly she went to an old woman, who promised her wonderful things, and desired her to return to her the next day.

The night seem'd very tedious to *Fanny's* step-mother, so eager was she to get rid of the poor girl. Scarce did the dawn approach to drive away the gloom from the horizon, when she secretly stole out to the old woman, who had

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promised

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promised her greater matters than she had power to effect. The old woman led her into a darkened room, where, after making some flourishes round her with a wand, she left her for some time. At length she return'd, and telling the step-mother to go into the park, assured her that she would soon be inform'd of *Fanny's* fate. In fact she was not long in the mall when a man of exceeding good appearance pass'd by her, and putting a letter into her hand, walk'd on. She read it, and there found that That very person was to make her fortune by marrying her daughter-in-law. This flattering oracle pleased her beyond measure: She pay'd the conjurers very prodigally, and return'd home tickled to the life.

Fanny's father, who, thro' cowardly complaisance for his wife, wish'd, no less than she, to be ridded of the girl, look'd out for somebody to marry her to, and not being disposed to give her any great share of his substance, he was not ashamed to come into a proposal made him of giving her to a taylor. The fellow was very rich, or at least there was reason to suppose him so, as he work'd for abundance of quality, and even for the court.

He mention'd the affair to his wife, who immediately began to suspect that she had been imposed upon by her imaginary witch, inasmuch as the man she had seen in the mall, had not the look of a taylor. She beg'd of her husband that she might see the person, and she presently lower'd her neck, when she saw a quite different figure from that which deliver'd her the letter.

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letter. However she was bent on the match, resolved to free herself from the girl at any rate, and the marriage was proposed to *Fanny* the very same day.

Fanny was yet but sixteen; and tho' she had an understanding ripe enough to know that such a match was by no means suitable to her native, noble and commendable loftiness, she consented however; deeming any infelicity inferior to that of being any longer with such a mother-in-law. And now behold she is a wife.

It was not long before, to her sorrow, she found she had acted with too much levity; she saw herself a dupe to the sorrow she had too much listen'd to, and now she perceived that she had but exchanged one tyrant for another still more inhuman, and less supportable, as not so easy to be parted with. However her husband forsook her, and went to *France*, without any manner of concern for the condition he left her in, for she was then with child. But to add to her wretchedness, several tradesmen demanded of her the payment of cloth and other commodities he had taken up. *Fanny* in vain look'd for money to satisfy them, her husband had taken all with him. The tradesmen seeing the poor young creature return to them melting in tears, found she was as sincere as she was grossly abused by the wretch who had married her, and used their endeavours to console her, by proposing to her an advantageous composition; but *Fanny* still nobly lofty refused it, and sold all she was possess'd of, to pay them their whole demands.

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Her father and step-mother, tho' acquainted with what had past, were cruel enough to make her no offer of the least assistance; and, to speak it in a word, they acted towards her no one part of persons of sense, of *Christians*, of parents, or even of human creatures. What succour therefore could the unfortunate poor thing hope for? Tho' her father had conceal'd from her, her birth, he could not rob her of the greatness of soul suited to her blood; she could not resolve to make her deplorable case known to any one. But luckily for her a man of quality, who was her god-father, hearing of her misfortune paid her a visit, and invited her home to live with his wife. Still thro' fear of scandal she excused herself from accepting the offer, and contented herself with the relief he was pleased send her.

It would be too prolix to enter into a detail of all the misfortunes of the unhappy *Fanny*; let it suffice to say that she never degenerated from her virtue, but ever made the best use of her adversity, attributing every circumstance of it to the disposition of Divine Providence, of which this is a signal proof: An elderly officer, who knew her, and was acquainted with the disorderly conduct of her husband, offer'd to send her to his own house to give her his sisters for companions, and to allow them jointly a very handsome equipage, promising at the same time never to come there himself but when and in the manner it should be most agreeable to her. She never could consent to the proposal, but chose rather to follow her husband,
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in hopes of recalling him from his irregularities. Accordingly she set out for *France*, which her husband quitted as soon as ever he was inform'd of her arrival.

This treatment seem'd very hard to her; however she was obliged to think of returning to *London*. In fact she set out to return home by the way of *Havre-de-grace*; and happily for her the first person she saw, coming into that town, was her brother, who just on his return home from the *West-Indies* was there weather-bound.

The step-mother desirous to rid herself of the young man for good, thought she had done it effectually by making him a sacrifice to the enemies of *England*, on board a man of war, but she little knew with what peaceable harmless views the fleet was fitted out. The youth received his congee almost as soon as he went on board. However as the ill treatment he had met with in his father's house had sufficiently wean'd him from it, he was no ways inclined to return home; and therefore being tolerably well equip'd, and having received some gratification from the Admiral for his presence at the raree-shew, he resolved to go on board a *West-India* man; he had made a very successful voyage, and was now returning home with a very pretty fortune, when he met with his sister. At first he affected not to know her, but at length declared himself openly to her. He acquainted her with the fortune he had made, and vow'd to share it with no one else. Sole brotherly love spoke in him then, but soon as he heard the distressful tale of his poor sister's adventures,

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compassion, tenderness, generosity, and every noble sense combined to confirm him in the advantageous designs he had conceived for her. He gave her a sum of money, and sent her to the *Hague* before him, whither the vessel he's in is to sail before it goes to *London*. I had the honour to see her yesterday at the house of a lady I pay'd a visit to, where she is at present waiting the arrival of her brother, who is to take her with him back to her native country.

The Knight return'd *Lactifer* thanks for this engaging history, and express'd the satisfaction he had had in hearing it, in the politest terms. I am only sorry, added he, that time will not permit me to say all I think of it. But allow me, sir, to take my leave at present; I have an appointment, and love to be punctual. I leave you, but upon condition of having the pleasure of meeting you here again to-morrow, and hope to see you somewhat sooner. *Lactifer* consented to it, and they parted.

End of the third conversation.



CONVER-

CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

Fourth CONVERSATION.

THE weather was fine, and the serenity of the sky determin'd the Knight and *Lactifer* to quit the walks almost as soon as they came into them, to breathe the more open air of the country which invited them abroad. When they were out of the gates of the city, you very justly told me, sir, says the Knight, that the history you related yesterday had a great deal of analogy with the conversation which introduced it. Therein we cou'd see two very different characters. One person is carried away like a slave by the passions, the other who seems overwhelm'd with a load of distress, knows how to make a right use of them. You see, sir, all mankind love themselves greatly, yet very few love themselves well. I

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wish, sir, says *Lactifer*, you wou'd be so kind to give me a clear idea of love, for I see nothing more fantastic than that passion. It does both good and evil, it frequently differs from itself, and every minute assumes a new shape: in a word, it is a very *Proteus*.

I agree with you, sir, says the Knight; it is certainly true that this passion does both good and evil, and all depends upon the object it proposes to itself, and the manner of it's being applied. To set this truth in a clear light let us give a just definition of love. Love, as I take it, is a passion of the soul, raised by an object which it thinks worthy it's attachment, on account of the pleasure it proposes to itself from the enjoyment of it; for if you remove pleasure, you take away love. Now the supposition of pleasure in the enjoyment of the beloved object, may be real or fictitious: it is ever fictitious, when we only love an object because it strikes us agreeably; it may always be real, if we make choice of no other object for our love than such a one as reason proposes to us. But since the fall of *Adam*, as our reason is excessively weaken'd, it must be own'd that the supposition of pleasure in the possession of the beloved object will never be absolutely true, but when we make use of our reason, to unfold in ourselves those first impressions of truth which heaven stamp'd on our souls at the first instant of our birth, to enable us to discern what is or is not worthy our affection.

The

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The soul is susceptible of passions from the moment of it's creation. It has then no other sentiments, than the senses communicate to it, when (if I may use the expression) wrapt up in a mortal body, in this body it appears in the world. Now the soul which thinks in that very instant, sees but the impression which God stamp'd on it, and then it thinks with as much justness, as it is afterwards liable to error, when made giddy by a croud of thoughts with which the senses beset it all at once. Look on an infant, who begins to see and hear; examin the different motions of it's little countenance, as yet scarcely form'd, you will perceive in it the symptoms of extraordinary astonishment; every object strikes him, every thing appears wonderful to him, and all seem different from the objects which his soul perceived, before his senses had any use. In short every thing proves that the senses, which were given us but to serve as warnings, cause a strange confusion in the soul, when they are taken for guides, and it is hence that arises the difference of objects which men look upon as worthy their love.

Let us not depart, sir, if you please, from the idea of these two states of the soul so different one from the other; the one in the instant of it's creation, the other when the bodily senses are sufficiently form'd to exercise their functions. They are very metaphysical ideas you here propose to me, sir, says *Lactifer*. I own it, says the Knight, but they are not the less true for being so. If, *Copernican*

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like, I shou'd build my reasons but upon the senses, they wou'd have but little solidity: but if with *Aristotle* I dwell upon certain and eternal truths, however abstracted they may be, I cannot but think my manner of reasoning just; rather I shou'd say, that no reasoning can be just, but in as much as it is abstracted from the senses. God is not a sensible object, we ought not then to love God because he cannot come within the reach of our senses. What are you talking of, sir, says *Lactifer*? Do not we all know that we are bound to love God? Yes, says the Knight, but who taught you this, or who inform'd your parents of it, or their fore-fathers? For at last we must run it up to the fountain-head. Shall we carry the question up to *Adam*; who told *Adam*, that he must love God? If *Adam* did not see God, as it is certain he did not, how cou'd he love him? He had then some principle within him more certain than his senses, which induced him to love God: this principle is from God himself and we possess it, equally with the first of mankind.

It is then to this certain principle independent on the senses that we must return, if we have not a mind to be deceived in the choice of the object we intend to love. For if we admit as a principle what the senses point out to us, and if that principle cou'd be as certain as it happens to be fictitious, the different attachments of men wou'd cease to be criminal, and *Fanny's* step-mother wou'd no more be worthy reproach. Observe, if you please, sir, two sorts of men upon earth: the first are very few, who
take

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take reason for their guide, and keep themselves with great care from all which may strike the senses in too lively a manner, because they mistrust them, as knowing them capable only of corrupting the soul. They avoid, as much as decency permits, the rest of mankind: but tell me, sir, do you imagin such persons void of love? no doubtless; their souls like ours are made to love; but they love nothing which strikes the senses; reason and the joint lights of nature and grace present them with quite another object, infinitely more worthy their pursuit. The second sort, which make the bulk of mankind, are scarce acquainted with aught but what is sensitive. The object which strikes them most is always most beloved; this is their principle.

The glittering appearance of a pompous equipage strikes the senses of a man who looks on it; the train of attendants who make the proudest part of it, the respect paid to this great person, or to that rich man, all flatters him, all seems glorious: the object appears lovely in his eye; he loves it; and this love makes an ambitious man of him. A woman of dress, looks on a pinner or cap which becomes her, as an object worthy her love; she loves it; and this ornament engrosses the whole woman. The eyes of a young man present to his soul the features of a girl, as something wonderfully perfect; he believes it upon the credit of his senses; and this object soon becomes that of his whole attention. But does he, who wide of the mob of mankind avoids these different objects, think the same? Yes; he loves; but

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then he loves only what truth, which he incessantly listens to, tells him is really amiable; and that alone which will ever subsist appears worthy to be beloved by him.

It is impossible not to love what is truly lovely; nevertheless one person sensibly struck with an object shall love it to madness, while another looks on it with utmost disdain and indifference. But if this object be essentially amiable, why do not all love it? It is because this very same object, which has agreeably affected the senses of one person, has wrought a quite opposite effect on those of another; so that one individual object is, and is not, lovely. Such is the contradictory caprice of the senses. Hence comes that a covetous man looks down with contempt on an ambitious one, while the man of ambition has in sovereign scorn the slave of avarice. The former loves nothing but money, the latter pomp alone: each is guided by his senses; and both fall victims and dupes to their love, because they falsely expect to find real pleasure in the possession of the beloved object.

How many dupes do I here discover, says *Lactifer*, from the principles you lay down! But methinks, sir, you exact from mankind an abstraction, which few are capable of. To reason as you wou'd have one, we must think in the same manner, as if we had no body, and we are ever but too sensible that we really have one. Besides was any creature made not to be loved?

You

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You take exceedingly well, says the Knight, the part of such as are unwilling to give themselves the trouble of thinking. But do you think this objection sufficient to justify the indolence of such as refuse to make use of their understanding? It would be flattering them too grossly to say it. Let us own then: First, that reason was only given us to make a right use of it. Secondly, that the abstraction in question requires not half the subtilty of genius which a mathematical problem does. Thirdly, that we are certainly bound to love the creature: but how? Oh there lies all the difficulty.

No one disowns the necessity of reason, for the conduct of life. But does reason tell us that we ought to love what flatters our senses? Does it say that such kind of objects are lovely enough to engross our affections? No; and if by impossible it could tell us so, experience would contradict it. We love to day what to-morrow we hate: yet the object is not alter'd, and therefore, if it had been truly lovely when we first loved it, it would be so still, and we should still love it. It is evident then that reason can only love an object which is essentially worthy to be beloved; that is an object which is ever the same, without ever losing the qualities which first render it lovely.

Where is the need of so much abstraction to comprehend this truth? Have we not all principles within us which naturally lead us to it? For example: God is infinitely good, consequently amiable; and He is solely and essentially so, consequently solely and essentially amiable.

A

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A man need be no great philosopher to understand that the consequences drawn from these principles must be certain; for if God alone is infinitely good; it follows, that he is sole possessor all the most amiable perfections; and that the creature, not possessing them, cannot, like God, be the object of our attachment; and if they do possess some perfections which they hold from the creator, they but give us a more sensible idea of what renders that creator infinitely amiable. Well, sir, what do you think of it? is the abstraction so great and difficult to be made? Is it exacting too much of man to require him to enter into so concise and natural a way of thinking? The senses have no share in this; it was thus the soul reason'd before it was confus'd by the tumultuous noise of them; and it is thus that men ought still to reason, if they were in as great an apprehension, as they should be, of committing mistakes.

In a word, I agree that we ought to love the creature: There are two motives sufficient to bind us to it. First, the creature was made by God; Secondly, it is of use to us. But do they deserve that we should be wedded to them, when they escape us like shadows? No; for by that we find, there is no proportion between a sensible perishable creature, and our soul which is eternally lasting. It must then have an eternal object: Such alone is worthy the love of man, and his being was given him only for such.

From these two principles, that God made the creature, and that the creature is useful,
follows

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follows not only that we ought to love it, but even how we ought to love it. If God made the creatures; we, who are of the number, ought to love ultimately none but him, since to him alone we are ultimately indebted for what we are. If he made the creature for our use; can we without a crime wed ourselves to it; can it be gratitude to prefer it to God? To use the creature we love then, and use it only with subordination to God, is to make a legitimate use of love. Thus that passion, so often criminal, becomes a virtue, and instead of being instrumental to our ruin is the pledge of a felicity which will never cease; as God, who is the ultimate object of it, is eternal.

Nothing can be finer, says *Lactifer*, than this sublime reasoning; but the difficulty is to reduce it to practice. Talk this language to the generality of mankind, and they will understand you no more than if you talk'd the language in use before the flood. True, says the Knight, and how would you have them understand me, when it is as hard for them to do, as it would be for you to hear me, if a drum was beating at your ear, while I am speaking. Remember, sir, our first principles, the senses are extremely noisy, and the passions, which they have excited or actually do excite, augment the noise; their loudness is excessively penetrating, and makes itself be heard before truth; no wonder it should please, because it flatters. Man is just what you make him: if the generality of mankind had been taught from their infancy and accustom'd to solid reasoning, would they, think you, be now
so

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so deaf to the voice of truth? They love none but sensible objects, it is true; but the reason is plain, 'tis because they are unacquainted with any other. How much then are they to be pitied!

Doubtless they are very much so, says *Lactifer*, and the more because it is very difficult to bring them to reason, by convincing them that their love is inordinate. I know a remarkable instance of this, which, if I thought it would not be tiresome to you, I would undertake to relate. I shall hear you with pleasure, sir, says the Knight; but lest fatigue in walking should lessen my attention, what if we rest ourselves beneath the shade of this beautiful oak? They sat down, and *Lactifer* began the following history.

I was acquainted with a lady in *Essex*, said he, who, when quite young, was left a widow, with two daughters. She was very rich, and the greatness of her estate, which afforded her the power and facility of giving a very good education to her children, but served to ruin them. She imagin'd that the fortunes of the girls would stand them in stead of every thing. This was true in one sense; for the greatest matches in the kingdom were proposed to her for them; however she was deceived in every point else, as the sequel will explain.

It is no easy matter for rich people not to love riches; and if they who love wealth do not fall into avarice, they seldom escape ambition. This was the favourite passion of our two young ladies, and their love of dress and
grandeur

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grandeur was without bounds. They lived high and were indulged in idleness, and it is easy to guess to what dangers so soft and luxurious a life must expose two young persons without any education. Their mother thought of marrying the eldest, but the match she proposed to her was by no means agreeable, because the gentleman was not an officer, and had not the airs of one. She gave her mother to understand that the gentleman, proposed to her for a husband, could never be pleasing to her, and intreated her not to use any compulsion with her.

She was wonderfully smitten with a young *Irishman*, a Captain in the army, whose whole fortune was his pay, quality, and assurance. Her inclination for him was somewhat a secret; but his being commanded into *Ireland* was a means of discovery. Immediately after his departure she grew melancholy, shun'd company, tormented herself, and shew'd as great a fondness for being alone as she was before remarkable for loving a croud. There needed no conjuration to come at the cause of this sudden change, and every means was tried to cure her of a passion which seem'd dangerous on account of it's violence; but all was in vain, the bare mention of the Captain's name was sufficient to draw a flood of tears from her eyes, and to put her into an ill humour for the rest of the day.

A noted counsellor, who was then Member of Parliament in the same county, transacted some affairs for the family, and frequently visited them in town and country, when leisure permitted him. To this gentleman the mother thought

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thought proper to communicate the disposition of her daughter, and the reasons she had for not consenting to her marrying the Captain. The counsellor approved of her reasons, and strengthen'd them with others of his own. Among the rest he added that the many examples which almost every day produces of the wretchedness of wives whose birth is not equal to that of their husbands might sufficiently shew that when noblemen, especially fortune-hunters, marry beneath their own rank, it is the wealth they mean to wed, and not the woman. The love they affect to express, says he, is greatly to be suspected; and the wedding-day is the æra whence their wives may date the contempt they ever after treat them with. In a word, it is but exposing a girl to the most dangerous of evils, to suffer her to follow her ambitious inclinations in the choice of a husband, who, tho' she does not foresee it, will in all probability render her wretched for the rest of her life.

The mother relish'd exceedingly these arguments, which she perceived to be founded on experience, and entreated the counsellor to reason with her daughter. He undertook it very readily, and resolved to neglect no means to save the girl from the danger which threaten'd her; but he found it impossible to get from her the least acknowledgement of her love for the Captain. Why then, miss, says he, do you give yourself up to such an extreme of melancholy, if you are not in love? Why do you shun company, you who was before so fond of it? What pleasure can you find in teasing yourself as you do?

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do? Have you any reason for it? What misfortune can have befallen you? Ah, sir, said she, I am more to be pitied than you can conceive: that is all I can tell you. She left him immediately, and went to her own apartment, where she shut herself up.

The counsellor went directly and acquainted her mother with what had pass'd. These, madam, said he, are the fatal effects of the little education you have given your daughters. If their minds and hearts had been early supplied with better nourriture they would not now have been liable to such disorder. You never employ'd them in any thing but trifles, and now such trifles appear to them of the most serious nature, for want of knowing any other objects — You weep, madam; but what do your tears avail? They cannot prevent the evil tendency of a passion too violent, which enslaves the young lady your daughter. Other remedies must be sought; but before we think of a cure, we must probe the depth of the wound this passion has made in her. To this end leave her to herself, only try to prevail with her to go out o' town. Lovers are naturally fond of groves, solitary plains, and purling streams, with whatever else can help to sooth their amorous frenzy. In reality the visible marks of joy appear'd in her countenance, when the young lady heard the proposal of going into the country: every thing was put in readiness, and they set out the next day in the morning.

In the country the young lady soon verified what the counsellor had said to her mother.

They

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They no sooner reach'd their country-seat, than she made her escape into the garden, at the bottom of which was a little thicket, whose shade and silence seem'd inviting to sadness. The counsellor perceived it, and follow'd her at a distance. She remain'd some time immovable in the thickest part of the wood, and her first motion was to draw out of her pocket a handkerchief to wipe off the tears which trickled down her cheeks in abundance.

Her mother having taken notice of her leaving the company so abruptly, sent for her; but before she could resolve to stir from a place she quitted sorely against her will, she sung in a very sorrowful note, but loud enough for the counsellor to hear, the following lines :

*Leave me, teasers, leave me, leave me
To enjoy the pleasing pain
Solitude alone can give me,
While I wail my absent swain.*

*Ah, he's gone for whom I languish!
Here my grief then let me calm.
To a breast so full of anguish
Solitude's the only balm.*

There needed no more to make the counsellor perfectly acquainted with what pass'd within the heart of this young lady. A song is but a song at best; but the manner of her singing it, sufficiently reveal'd the impression it had on her, and how much more she was affected by the truth it contain'd, than by the air it was set to. The counsellor left her to retire from the garden

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garden by herself, and follow'd her in some time after, musing on what he had just heard, not without a good deal of concern, as he could not help thinking that the young lady's heart was tainted.

The gentleman whom her mother had pitch'd upon for a husband for her was of the company; he endeavour'd a thousand ways to shew the young lady how desirous he was of earning her affection, and had a thousand little engaging attentions for her during supper-time, but all to no purpose. He imagin'd then that his assiduities had not sprightliness enough to please her, and that not having the courtly airs of an officer, his attempts were fruitless. Certain it is however that he had a very good understanding, and a disposition fit to make a wife happy.

Every one endeavour'd to promote mirth; the supper was elegant, and the wine exquisite. The young lady alone seem'd not to share in the gaiety of the company; wholly taken up with her absent lover, nothing but sighs interrupted her silence. At length tired with the sight of pleasure she could not partake of, she address'd herself to the gentleman, from whom she expected more complaisance than from the rest, to propose to him the rising from table; but was extremely surpris'd at his answer. We are so well here, fair lady, why would you wish to remove? Good-cheer and pleasant looks are very agreeable; will you promise to help me to the like in the garden? No sir, said she, I am mighty glad you find so much pleasure here, but cannot conceive how any body can drink
so

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so much. To which the gentleman replied,

*Phillis! would you my truth reward,
Then love should have it's due:
Bacchus no more would I regard,
But sacrifice to you:*

*My pains to respite, now I drown
A wretch's power to think.
Ah lovely maid! then cease to frown,
And I shall cease to drink.*

The young lady blush'd, and so happy a reply set the whole company on laughing, even to the counsellor, who for a moment dismiss'd his usual gravity. They had no more thoughts of going to the garden now, being wholly bent on diversion. The gentleman's song occasion'd the singing of others, and at length the counsellor was desired to oblige the company with one in his turn. I sing? if any one, says he, had taken it into his head to set *Coke* and *Littleton* to music, I would hold out 'till to-morrow morning; but I have always had so slender an acquaintance with *Cupid* and *Venus*, and that kind of gentry, excepting in fable, that I never gave myself the trouble to sing their praise. I do not pretend to find fault with music, it is an art worthy great minds; I only profess to declare my own ignorance. 'Twas to no purpose for the counsellor to plead excuses; they continued their solicitations 'till he was compel'd to comply.

What would you have me sing, says he, I neither know drinking-songs nor love-songs;
the

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the former were never to my taste, and the latter have always seem'd to me fit only to corrupt the heart. But for these maxims I should have given myself more to music than I really have done; but I chose rather to be ignorant of it, than to run the risk of making an ill use of it. All' this he said purposely to give the young lady matter of reflexion, and thereby dispose her for the advice he intended to give her. However, said he, not to spoil mirth, I will give you a little catch, which speaks both of *Love* and *Bacchus*, without giving any incitement to either; 'tis quite new, and if it amuses you I have my end in singing it.

*One time I fell asleep and dreamt,
I saw my fair one in the grove;
And from all cares and fears exempt
Was giving her proofs of my love.
Together then harmlessly chatting,
We tasted reciprocal joys;
When Cupid and Bacchus came prating,
And scared her away with the noise.
Some time each obstinately strove
The conquest of my heart to make;
But, tho' I wish'd the palm to Love,
His foe threw him drunk on his back.
The quarrel thus ended by quaffing,
My sides at the fancy I shak'd;
I laugh 'till e'en weary of laughing,
And with the loud transport awak'd.*

Every

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Every one laugh'd at the humour of the counsellor's song, and the ridiculous light in which it sets *Bacchus* and *Love*. Whoever made this song, says the gentleman, was not much in love, I dare vouch. Perhaps not at all, says the counsellor. Do you think that possible, sir, replies the gentleman? Yes truly I do, says the counsellor, and it seems no mystery to me. I do not mean to talk of those insipid creatures, the coldness of whose constitutions betrays in their countenances less analogy of life and motion, than even you may see in the statues of *Hide-Park-Corner*. But any persons you can imagine, tho' of the greatest sprightliness and warmth, may avoid being in love at all; according to the common idea which the term *Love* conveys. You will allow, sir, that all the passions are in every man, but every passion is not predominant in all men. Their predominancy is frequently constitutional; but if a man applies his natural warmth to objects quite different from those which are apt to raise a criminal passion in him; if, like a man of sense, he pitches upon such objects as are worthy his pursuit, and suffers none else to take up his attention, how would you have love enter into his breast?

It is very uncommon to see a man become amorous, who knows how to employ his time seriously and usefully; love only attacks the hearts of the idle. You will say that antiquity abounds with instances of great men who have been subject to the passion of love. But what were these great men? *Pagans*, whose corrupt theology led them to pay religious rites, and disorderly

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disorderly homage to *Venus*; and yet we see what subjects of ridicule their poets made of this sort of lovers. What pretty patterns to follow were a *Hercules* spinning from his distaff in the company of *Omphale* and her maids, a *Galatea* running shamefully in pursuit of *Acis*, a *Cybele* not ashamed of coming down from heaven to court a poor silly shepherd like *Atis*! Is it not plain that the poets in representing such things to us, could only intend to turn to ridicule *Love* and the other burlesque divinities, and to give us a contemptible idea of them? When they figure to us a *Jupiter* in form of a bull carrying off *Europa*, do they not mean to give us the hint, that love sinks into brutes the greatest men, when once they suffer themselves to be blindly led by it? Now, if you please, pass what encomiums you like best on the passion of love, but you will find it very difficult to gain over to your sentiment a man, who is acquainted enough with that passion to conceive a horror for it, and wants not useful means to fill up time with something far beyond it.

Why do not you quote me an *Amadis* of *Gaul*, and a furious *Orlando*, and such other heroes, whose romantic tales still daily tend to corrupting the hearts and minds of young people? For my own part, were I to chuse, among this kind of heroes, Don *Quixot* should have the preference. 'Tis true he is in love with his *Dulcinea*, but that is because he is a mad man. Sir, says the gentleman, if love had a law-suit upon his hands, he would hardly chuse you for his counsel, unless he had a mind to be

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non-suited. Yet what if, coming to you with his brief, he should fee you with the point of an arrow? I set him at defiance, sir, says the counsellor; he is blind, he is a brat, and unable to hurt any but brats. Oh for this bout, says the gentleman, you carry the matter too far, and overstrain your satire. Why so, sir, says the counsellor; if love wounds but such idle persons as are amused only with toys, can he hurt any but brats? For what is it that distinguishes a reasonable grown person from a brat, but the difference of their occupations? What is it to me that this and that person are thirty years old? I can only look upon them as overgrown brats, when I see them at such an age amused with pagods and puppets. Here is an overgrown brat whose delight is to play with love. Why so? It is because the ideas of that urchin are as contracted as his own; and such are the brats the urchin is fond of doing mischief to. When the counsellor had done speaking they arose from table, and the ladies fatigued with their journey, wanting rest, every one retired to their apartments.

You see sir, says *Lactifer*, with what spirit the counsellor pleaded against the inclinations of the young lady; and yet all was not sufficient to give her love any other object than the Captain. The counsellor curious to know what impression his discourse against love had made on the young lady, contrived to have a room next to hers, the better to overhear what she said, her great vivacity making her frequently think aloud when alone. In fact he heard her
at

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at the window, the weather being warm and pleasant; and the better to distinguish what she said, he gently lifted the sash, and listen'd to the following soliloquy.

Can I pretend to be mistress of my heart? What resistance can my weakness make to the irresistible power of love? It is fine talking, but there is no breast exempt from submitting to his forces. What is there sweeter than love, and why should *Cybele* be made a jest of, for tenderly loving her lovely *Atis*? What she does for him is so moving, what she says to him so soft, that there is no room for scoffing at her being enamour'd with so amiable a shepherd, because but a shepherd.

*Try not to prove then, senseless Elves,
That lovers should be equal:
The practice of the gods themselves
Will contradict your sequel.*

*For mortal charms, they all, we see,
Forsook their seats above,
To prove that dull equality
Is heresy in love.*

*Let others pride a glittering group
Of riches to inherit,
My sole ambition be to stoop
To love and honour merit.*

*When blest with riches I exalt
The worth I see below;
'Tis heaven's, not mine, if any fault,
That I such wealth bestow.*

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*Power has no greater privilege
Than voluntary bending;
And love, when 'tis the stooper's pledge,
Finds pleasure in descending.*

*Heav'n I, like Cybele, would quit,
To meet my lovely boy;
And prize a cottage, more than it,
Where I might him enjoy.*

*Tho' envious fortune pleased to make
A fence between our stations,
Yet stronger fate that fence to break,
Unites our inclinations.*

*Nay where even fate's and fortune's power,
To widen them, combine,
Resistless love delights but more
Two distant hearts to join.*

Oh brave young lady, says the counsellor softly, you are better acquainted with romantic subjects, than your catechism, I find. He drew down the sash, and began to consider what method he should take to rescue this poor young creature from the dangerous condition she was in. He exclaim'd to himself against parents, who neglect the education of their children, with as much spirit as he had done against love. Then he made some reflections on the good qualities of the distemper'd young lady he had to cure. She has wit, said he, vivacity, and sweetness of temper; she is young, and naturally tender-hearted; is it impossible then to infuse better sentiments into her? He resolved on a trial, and went about it thus.

The

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The next day he took notice of her going into the garden by herself, and the opportunity seem'd to favour his design. He follow'd her, and with an air of freedom and gaiety said to her: Confess the truth, young lady, are you not a little angry with me for treating love so roughly as I did last night? I must own, sir, said she, if I myself was in love, I would never forgive you what you said on the subject, nor your manner of treating lovers. Do not you know then, said he, that it is ever an artifice of lovers to rail against the passion they fondle most? What do you mean, said she, would you make me believe that you are in love? Why not, says the counsellor. Ha, ha, ha, ha, says the young lady, the pretty paradox, a lawyer in love! I allow, said he, fair lady, that you who seem made for love, may love with a much better grace than I can; but yet lawyer as I am, I have a heart made like other men's, and am not perhaps so insensible to an amiable object as you may imagin. Excuse me, sir, said she, if I cannot believe you, I am certain you do but jest. I own it, says the counsellor; I must confess that I was once in love, but my passion was not very lasting. I found love too troublesome, it interrupted my rest, it broke my sleep, it made me pensive, restless, dull, and melancholy; in a word it gave me a hundred defects, and even took me from the most serious affairs in life. I therefore even took leave of love, and so got rid of my uneasy companion. What then, says the lady, are passions to be thrown off like dress? That indeed must

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be a fine secret you are in possession of. Have you a mind I should teach it you, fair lady? Am I then in love, said she? No matter, says the counsellor, let it serve for your love to come. Oh! is that the case, said she, well with all my heart. Hear me then, miss, if you please.

Love has different principles; the whole affair depends upon the knowledge of them. For if we are not acquainted with them, we can never encounter love with it's own principles, which is the end we must propose to ourselves; for I need not tell you that no evil is to be cured but by it's contraries. Now the cause of love is to be reduced to four principles; the first is general, to wit, idleness; the second, conversations; the third, reading; the last, the objects which flatter our senses. Here's a great number, says the young lady, how would you have me remember so many things? By making use of your sense and memory, says the counsellor; and that is what I mean to shew you the necessity of, by unfolding to you the common and fatal consequences of what I call idleness, in regard to love. What then do you mean, sir, by what you call idleness? I mean, says the counsellor, an indolence and tepidity, which disgusts us with useful employment, which makes us look upon it as insupportable, and which consequently hinders us from making a right use of our reason, which is the distinctive of man from brute.

Our understanding is glad to accustom itself to an undetermin'd and general way of thinking; never wholly taken up by any one thing,

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an infinity of objects crowd in upon it, because it is full of little else but vacancy; and if these objects do but delight us, we readily give them reception, without remarking their defects. We think them lovely, and we should have deem'd them quite other, if idleness had not diverted us from making that use of our understanding, for which God gave it us. Favour me but with attention, fair lady, and the particular principles of love will, in their detail, furnish us with instances enough to explain in a clearer light what I advance.

The first particular principle of love, according to what I have said, is conversations, that is discourses of gallantry, which are at present so much in vogue. What must be the thoughts of a young lady, whose indolence has kept her understanding void, when she sees a young spark at her knees, tenderly telling her that her worth is infinite; that she merits the rank of a goddess; and that she surpasses in beauty and graces the queen of love, with other such fulsome speeches? She begins to think there is something in what she is told, and is taken with it. She believes the spark in love with her, and love, in the mantle of gratitude steals into her breast, because she has nothing to oppose his entrance with; then it is, fair lady, that reflection, a little reflection is of the greatest stead. When a spark undertakes to utter his luxurious nonsense to a young lady of sense; reflection will shew her that such a kind of homage is due to none but God; that the terms of goddess and queen of love favour too much of the ignorance and

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superstition of paganism, not to convey horror. These are truths, misss, within the reach of every capacity, and truths sufficient to obstruct love's entrance into our hearts, if our hearts do but relish them as much as our minds are convinced by them.

These truths in reality, tho' certain, are but trivial in themselves; but then these kinds of discourse are likewise so trivial, that a very trifling of industry is required to oppose and obstruct the impression they are capable of making upon a mind absolutely unfill'd. But if to these truths we add others more extensive and powerful; if by our reflections on useful books, we fill up the vacant space in our minds with them; and if we have a taste for the beauties which truth there unfolds to us; will the reading of romances and other dangerous books make any impression upon us? The soul cannot be affected by two opposite passions at once; if truth once enters it, error is immediately discover'd and expel'd: First, because the horror which the sight of it gives us will make us reject it; secondly, because it is no more to be allied with truth, than straw with the purest gold. Truth is a lambent flame which consumes error, and yet is as balsamic and sweet as honey in the mouth. Let us then but take a taste of it's sweetness, and we shall find an insupportable bitterness in error; and if we see some men who are unhappily pleased with it; we shall look upon them as sickly persons, whose palates are vitiated, and consequently as worthy objects of our compassion.

Truth

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Truth however, strong as it is, teaches us to be diffident of ourselves, and not to rely upon it any farther than we follow the maxims it inspires us with; so that it would be losing all to build upon the truths our understanding is convinced of, and our hearts captivated with; if we neglected to guard ourselves against the tempests we are threaten'd with in this life. The waves of this restless ocean are frequently beating upon us, and lashing the foot of that very edifice which truth has raised within us. It is true indeed that where the foundation is a rock, the floods can have no great force of impression; but however little a gap there be for them to pass through, they will soon augment, and the structure be quickly overthrown. I would say, that if we are not careful to lock up our senses from the objects which may strike them, we shall be made sensible to our cost of the ravage the world is capable of making in us. We examin a creature, it appears lovely to us, the tender and seducing language it utters, conveys itself sweetly to us, and error puts on the semblance of truth to surprize us. The pleasure we took in seeing and hearing this creature, makes us seek to renew it, all seems innocent in this proceeding: and once we perceive in us the reigning love for the creature, which stifles the love we had for truth; we try to shun it, we would fain be rid of it, but it's chains are too strong, and the tyranny it exerts over us, from free, as we were before, sinks us into slaves. But if in love with truth, we are mis-

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trustful of ourselves, in pursuance of it's maxims; we shall shun whatever is capable of subverting us, we shall not build on our own strength, but avert our looks from whatever is vain and useless. It is thus we are to preserve steady the edifice which truth has raised in our hearts. Truth sits there enthron'd, and not the universe, without our assistance, can reach to dethrone it.

All you say, sir, seems very true, says the young lady; but where there is an opposite habit, what means can be taken? I ought, you will say, to read serious books, but I have an utter distaste for them; I should keep myself employ'd, but that I could never resolve upon. You see therefore, sir, [that it is impossible for me to make any practical application of these truths. Of all dangerous conditions, young lady, says the counsellor, I know none to come up to that of an imagination naturally fearful, and easily alarm'd; every thing throws them into despondency, because every thing seems impracticable. But ought our apprehension to be the rule of our conduct? If I supposed you in love with any one, and should ask you why you loved him, doubtless you would answer me that your imagination shew'd the person to you as a lovely object. But should there be any other object really more lovely still than he, would it be just in you not to love it more, because your imagination could not present it to you as such. Truth is of this number, and because it is not so obvious to sensation, you think

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think you cannot love it. Be sure, at least, that it is really lovely in itself; and if you cannot be sensible of it, the reason is that error dwells within you. When truth dwells in our hearts; they are inaccessible to error: and, by the opposite rule, when error takes possession of the breast; how should truth find an entrance into it, since they are never to be allied?

Is not this what I say, sir, says the young lady? I have contracted a habit quite opposite to your maxims, and therefore cannot be moved by them. I can see the truth of them but cannot love it.

Do you imagin then, miss, said the counsellor, that such an evil is without remedy? No it is very far from being so. Tell me only, do you wish at least to love truth? Certainly I do. But why would you love it? Why, says the young lady? Nay I know not why, unless it be that I see many men esteem'd for loving it. Ah, miss, said the counsellor, how little instruction have you received, and how much are you to be pitied! Yet have one minute's patience more, I have but one thing farther to observe to you.

Which is the most amiable of the two, God or the creature? What a question do you ask me, said she! It is not so odd a one as you imagin perhaps, said the counsellor: If God is more lovely, why do we love the creature more than him? A person in love with a created object dwells on that alone, all his looks tend towards that, all his sighs are after that,

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and his heart sends those sighs perpetually in pursuit of That, while GOD himself is lost to their minds by a forgetfulness which begets horror to think of. It is evident then that, however convinced we are that GOD is more worthy our affection than the creature, yet the creature is prefer'd to GOD. We may therefore be assured that the creature is as really error itself, since it ever deceives us, as GOD is really truth itself, who never deceives us; and that the repugnance we feel to loving truth is equally a repugnance to loving GOD. This, young lady, is the melancholy consequence of what you just now own'd to me, that you comprehended the truth perfectly well, but could not love it.

Let us silence for a while our imagination, and not be alarm'd without a cause. GOD is the truth, he alone is amiable, but he cannot have place in our hearts while error keeps possession there, because truth cannot be allied with falshood. But hear, miss, what truth says, *Open thy heart and I will replenish it*; that is, empty thy heart of whatever is there of unclean, and then I will take possession of it. But how shall we empty it? There are two powerful means to do this. The first is, to avoid all such sensible objects as cause us to make a different use of that love, which is natural in us, from the use for which GOD gave it to us; and to apply ourselves in a serious retreat to the lecture of such books as are capable of bringing us acquainted with truth.

For

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For in retirement our senses are quiet and leave us so, our reason unfolds, error becomes visible, and the comparison of both discovers to us the state of danger we are in. The second means is to apply ourselves closely to the knowledge of this danger, and to present ourselves to ourselves in our true light, that is, with all our deformities. 'Tis by doing this that we shall find it an easy task to empty our hearts of whatever we see there which appears unclean. The danger of losing ourselves, by following the maxims of the world, and loving the creature better than the creator, will make us fear to do it; and the comparison of truth with the erroneous deformity of our own conduct will convince us of the certainty of our loss if we persist in it; since we can never be united to him while we are so different from him. Can you conceive, fair lady, that such a discovery could have so little effect on us as not to induce us to hate error and love truth? If we are unfortunate enough to love the creature too much, we still love ourselves much better, and there is no man willing to work his own perdition.

How happy are you, sir, said she, with a sigh, in being so convinced of these truths, and so much in love with them! I should reason as you do, if I had the same affection for them. I see plainly, fair lady, said the counsellor, that your prejudiced mind cannot easily embrace these truths; it is a misfortune common to all persons who have been educated in softness, sloth,

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sloth, and indolence, and made no other use
 of their understanding than to corrupt it. How-
 ever, miss, afford me some comfort: you know
 that friendship alone speaks in me at present,
 and that you are the only person I would have
 taken the pains to say so much to. I know
 your secret, you would be to blame to deny
 it, and it is because I know it so well that I so
 much pity your condition. You are in love,
 fair lady, and your love is carried to excess.
 I have been a witness to your sighs and tears;
 but judge of the object that gave them birth.
 What is there more melancholy than to be en-
 amour'd with a creature, which has nothing
 constant in it? If that object was never to be
 separated from you, your love for it would be
 less blameable; but guess from the pain which
 a slender absence gives you at present, what
 must be the torment of an eternal separation:
 for, in short, you must quit this beloved ob-
 ject, and quit it for ever. Quit it for ever,
 said she! What a torture you condemn me to!
 She retired with tears in her eyes, and left the
 counsellor in a very deep concern.

In a word, sir, says *Lactifer*, to cut short a
 story which is already but too long, the young
 lady persisted in her passion, and in the defects
 which had given birth to it. She married her of-
 ficer, and was no happier than the generality of
 ladies who marry men of a rank superior to
 their own; however she made herself some a-
 mends with the pleasures of the town, which
 she gave herself wholly up to. Her life was
 one

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one continued dissipation of time and thought; the entertainments of the stage were her most serious employment, and at last became the occasion of her death.

One evening at an opera she was seized with a sudden chill, the use of her limbs forsook her, and she was forced to be convey'd in the middle of the second act to her chair, and in that home. Physicians were sent for, they found her in danger, and frankly told her of her approaching end; but she would not hear a syllable utter'd of death. A clergyman was immediately brought, to dispose her, if possible, for the perilous journey of eternity, and to prevail with her to resign to the will of heaven. But the first sight of him was a flash of lightning to her. The appearance of the minister of God seem'd to reproach her with all her misconduct, and she could not support the torment of seeing him, much less of hearing him. At length she died without suffering any about her to talk to her of God, and without giving herself any signs of repentance. What a melancholy death, says the Knight; and what frightful consequences of too great an attachment to the creature! Will mankind never understand that their perdition is owing to the ill use they make of their senses? No. Truth makes no more impression on them, religion is buried in heaps of error and ignorance, respect is not even paid to the name of it, and the fatal time of universal apostacy foretold by *St. Paul* seems to be now come. There never was an age more enlight-
en'd,

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en'd, and yet none was ever more obdurate than the present. But what do I talk of? Let us leave these too certain truths, which are not to be unfolded in an instant; we must take a longer time to consider them; it is time now to be returning homewards. They arose and took their way towards the *Hague*, and on their approach towards the town, were met by a parcel of fots, who were rioting together. Observe, says the Knight, these are drunkards who are as much in love with the liquor which has intoxicated them, as your young lady was with her Captain. Which, think you, fir, the most criminal? Drunkenness undoubtedly was ever a crime, says *Lactifer*, these are drunk with wine, and she was so with love: but you will allow, fir, that the latter is more natural than the former, and consequently less criminal. I own it, says the Knight, but both enjoy the creature, and place their felicity in it, whereas it was given us only to make a legitimate use of. Both therefore are very criminal; for which reason I cannot sufficiently admire at the fantastical folly of mankind in the judgment they pass on the one and the other. A sot is despised because he is enamour'd with liquor; a leud man is look'd upon as a worthy person, he has the right even to boast of his vice, and it is only made a subject of mirth. Let us then acknowledge, fir, that the mind of man is full as weak as his heart is corrupted, which confirms the maxim of a celebrated author, who tells us that the corruption of the heart
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is ever the cause of the infection of the understanding. At the conclusion of this discourse they reach'd the town, and took leave of each other after having promised to meet the next day, at the usual hour, in the walks.

End of the fourth conversation.



CONVER,

CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

Fifth CONVERSATION.

LACTIFER, who was come to the walks before the time appointed, was, 'till the Knight appear'd, taken up with listening to the conversation of a company of rakes, who sat near him. Nothing, said he, as soon as the Knight came up to him, nothing moves me more to pity than the manner of conversing common to the generality of men. I have been this half hour attending to the conversation of these *Dutchmen*, and have yet heard no one thing worthy the attention of a man of sense or virtue, unless it be to excite him to tears. Their whole entertainment is upon the subject of a parcel of drunkards, who fought yesterday, and it appears by their discourse, that the fury of the combatants, and the blows they gave each other, was a very diverting scene to them.

Where

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Where is the wonder, says the Knight. It is but of a piece with the fashionable ferocity of the age we live in. Wrath and revenge are the darling character of our cotemporaries. We have daily proofs of it in their bloody entertainments. I call them bloody entertainments, because, not having sense enough to be ashamed of the brutality of gratified wrath, they seem to take a pleasure in making it public to the eyes of the whole world, and whoever should attempt to stem the torrent, might chance to have reason for repentance. Poniarding in *Spain* and *Italy* is made honourable by custom; the frantic levity of the sword in *Germany* and *France* is look'd upon as a genteel piece of gallantry; snicker-sneering in *Holland* is metamorphosed from brutality into a *Dutch* accomplishment; and even in *England*, whither true breeding and good sense seem to have retreated, boxing and prize-fighting are become a kind of theatrical entertainment; and duelling is so far from being deem'd a disgrace, that the criminal parties themselves, whom the least portion of reason and modesty might induce to conceal the shameful proofs of their savage fierceness, are the first to expose their want of virtue and sense in the public papers, with a vanity more becoming canibals than members of a civilized nation; as if they could not be content to be inwardly conscious of the inhumanity of their own nature, unless the whole world be made witness how little they deserve to live in it.

Wrath

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Wrath is an unaccountable passion, says *Lactifer*, and, I believe, the most odious of all passions. If we but return to the principles we laid down, says the Knight, we shall find that the case is the same with wrath as with every other passion. It is a kind of drunkenness which robs us of reason, and plunges us into a thousand extravagancies; but if anger is orderly, it is a virtue, like any other regular passion, which pursues the end for which God gave it to us. You know, sir, it is written, *Be angry and sin not*: which means that our wrath or anger cannot be criminal, while it has for its principle God or his Divine law. Such was the wrath which the Saviour of the world gave us an example of, in turning out of the temple the profane buyers and sellers. But the object is ever criminal when it has a temporal object in view. In a word the merit or malice of our wrath wholly depends on the good or evil love from whence it flows.

What can you mean by love, sir, says *Lactifer*; what is there more incompatible than love and wrath? Can you presume that love, always tender, always gentle, always accompanied with meekness, may be the source of a passion so vehement and so diametrically opposite to these virtues? Yes, sir, says the Knight, I do not retract what I have said, I will even add that wrath is love itself, but love in disguise. Why does a man who has just received an affront put himself in a passion, but because in love with himself, he imagines the insult he has received a lessening of the merit he thinks himself

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self possess'd of, and loves himself for. If he had less self-love, he wou'd be less prone to wrath.

One friend admonishes another of a fault which renders him contemptible; and because he has form'd of himself an idea of a something which never had existence, to-wit, a faultless creature; the first sentiment, which this blind love, he has conceived for himself, suggests to him, is anger; because this love will admit no defects in the persons it possesses.

Cain fancied that God disregarded him, when he prefer'd *Abel's* sacrifice to his, and self-love carried him to that extremity of wrath which made him shed his own blood in that of a brother. It is plain then, not only that love is the source of anger, but even that anger itself is love; since it is nothing else to speak properly than love which seeks it's own satisfaction. Have we not daily instances of this? A truncheon, a ribbon, a piece of *China* ware, or the meereft trifle in nature with respect to mankind, if it be denied the persons in love with it, renders them wretched, anger takes possession of the soul, because the soul was in love with the bauble.

I understand your system perfectly well, sir, says *Lactifer*, and many instances recur to my mind which prove the truth of it. Among others I was acquainted with a gentleman in *England*, of very great vivacity, *Sir William Temple* by name, who notwithstanding his natural warmth was always calm, always mild and affable amidst occasions the most exciting to wrath,
without

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without even shewing the least symptoms of alteration in his countenance. One day at a public entertainment he was giving to several persons of distinction, one of his servants let fall, and broke, some dozens of very curious and valuable *china*. He call'd the servant up to him, and the whole company, who expected to see him break the poor fellow's head, were extremely surpris'd to hear him say with a graceful serenity, *learn from this accident that when china falls it generally breaks*. I was present at this scene, and could not forbear smiling at the air of indifference he spoke with. The company asking him, how he could command himself with so much ease, there is nothing strange in it said he, I amuse myself with every thing, but am in love with nothing. Your system brought me to mind this passage, and now I easily comprehend, whence it is that some men are never in wrath, while others are hurried out of themselves, by it, on the slightest occasions.

Every man is more or less weak, and his foibles, in proportion as they are great or small, subject him more or less to his passions. But these foibles have each a principle whence they derive their origin, and how happy wou'd men be, if they wou'd but distinguish the passion from the principle which actuates it. They wou'd soon see, that their liberty might be more extensive, if their attachments were more contracted. Man wou'd fain be free, and is so persuaded of this truth, that he forces himself to fancy he is free in the very midst of slavery, without allowing himself the time to reflect that
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he is led away captive by overpowering passion. Wrath forces him out of himself, he feels the violence, yet willing to think himself free, tho' controul'd, he tells himself that his wrath is just. Such is the effect of self-love, the essential source of anger; and this principle is so certain, that, if we look back to the first ages of christianity, when self-love seems to have been absorb'd in the love of God, we shall find very few instances of wrath among the christians of those times.

We may look even farther back and observe what pass'd in the synagogue; there we may discover many and frequent instances of the wrath of the *Hebrews* against their prophets, and we shall find them actuated by the same principle which moves us, that is self-love which then was and to this day is prefer'd to the love of God and his holy laws. Thence the massacre of their prophets, because these holy men reproach'd them with their vices, foretelling them that their incredulity would be the cause of their being lost and forsaken by God. The self-love of this people suffer'd them not to believe the truth of these prophecies, and they could not bear to be lessen'd in their own eyes. The Saviour of the world speaks to them in the same language with the prophets; the synagogue foams with wrath, and tho' his innocence could not be unknown to them, since they could not forge one accusation against him, which bore the face of reasonable, yet their wrath carried them to the putting him to death contrarily to the very law.

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law. It is thus that self-love abuses us. Happy they who know it, and know how to ward against it!

It is evident from this reasoning, says *Lac-rifer*, that the more religion a man has, the less is he liable to being hurried away by his passions; because the more strictly he is united to GOD, the more GOD communicates himself to him, by his love; and as you observe, sir, love being the principle of anger, by loving GOD alone, whom he cannot lose, he never can meet with an occasion of being carried out of himself by passion.

Let us take care of mistakes, says the Knight, there are many persons, who give themselves up to wrath under the cloak of piety, of uncommon piety. I will allow that such piety is meerly chimerical, but still it bears the name of the real among men; and that is sufficient to justify the endeavours of those who see clear, to disabuse them. I mean to speak of an enthusiast; are you acquainted with that sect, sir, or do you know that there is not a more perverse race in human nature, or more subject to wrath! The reason of it is plain, all their piety consists in grimaces. Look attentively to this enthusiast muttering at church; he fancies himself at prayer, not knowing that their mouths are but ill-suited to, and very unworthy of prayer, whose hearts are infected with rancour, and canker'd with wrath. Observe that other enthusiast lifting the whites of her eyes impiously towards insulted heaven: she too fancies herself devout, ignorant

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rant that charity alone can make her such, which she has so little of as to prefer herself to all mankind. Follow her home, the least contradiction puts her in a rage. Her neighbours tell her, she has staid too long at meeting, her children have been whining, her domestics in confusion, and her husband out of temper at her absence; no matter, self-love is the cause of her misconduct, she stay'd so long at meeting only to pass for a woman of virtue; but remark how little she deserves to be thought such: she hears herself blamed, and gives herself up to all the violence of wrath. She is told that true piety consists in complying with the duties of her station; but because she is not flatter'd, her friends, who are charitable enough to advise her, are irreligious libertines, and no injuries are bad enough to vent against them. A C———r or some other fanatic zany of the same stamp applauds her, and she will rather run rambling after him than mind the duties of her family or attend to the wholesome advice of a lawful pastor, who is too honest to flatter her vanity and love of idleness. In a word every thing which contradicts or does not please an enthusiast is an object of unlimited rage.

You have drawn here, sir, says *Lactifer*, a very disagreeable picture, yet I cannot deny it to be a just copy of it's original; having had occasion to know the latter by experience. Before I left *England* I went with some friends to hear one Mr. W——d preach, a man whose smug dress and soft insinuation drew after him

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a very great concourse. In his sermon he hinted to us with an air of humility, that he had as great a number of followers as our Saviour had, when *Zacheus* was forced to climb the tree to get a sight of him. So blasphemous a piece of arrogance greatly offended me, and I could not help expressing my indignation, by saying, I found nothing in his preaching worthy the comparison, and believed curiosity to be the only reason why so many persons follow'd him preferably to some others, whom I thought much better preachers. I spoke a little louder than I design'd to do, and a woman, who was near me, over-hearing me, put herself into such a fury, that it drew upon me the eyes of the whole congregation; which put me so out of countenance, that I was glad to slink away as soon as the throng would permit me.

I fancy, sir, says the Knight, this is the person who was some time ago sent to *Georgia* to propagate the gospel in that colony. The very same sir, says *Lactifer*, tho' I cannot own it without a blush; since I think it a reproach to religion that so vain and enthusiastic a creature should be sent on a purpose which requires the most orthodox, experienced, and accomplish'd divines. I remember, says the Knight, to have read sometime since a journal of his from *Gibraltar*, and, if the translator does not injure him, I think I never met with so finish'd a piece of vanity and arrogance. He affects to write in the style of *St. Paul*, pilfers his very phrases, assumes the air of an apostle, and, if

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if one may form any notion of an author from his works, seems to think himself inferior to none of the apostles, but rather deems it an honour done to them to adopt their manner of speaking. Without this little artifice, he could never have hoped for the title of an apostle, since there appears nothing in him of apostolic but the affectation of their tortured phrases. It is very happy for *England* that it is rid of a man of such a dangerous turn: for considering the folly of the age we live in, he might have been the author of a new religion in a nation, which has already but too many.

Your reflection is very just, sir, says *Lastifer*, and the love I bear to my dear country makes me think of it with concern. I met a gentleman yesterday, just arrived from *London*, who inform'd me that this dangerous person return'd from *Georgia* some time past; and has, since his arrival in *England*, done a great deal of mischief. I have nothing to say against the man's moral character, barring the visible vanity of his conduct, and his spirit of opposition to his legitimate superiors; but tho' these be in themselves real blemishes, and considerable ones, yet I will rather think him mistaken in these particulars than voluntarily criminal; as I believe him irreproachable in other respects. A fantastical severity of doctrine, an affected sanctity of countenance, and an inveterate zeal in railing against all of his own profession have drawn an infinity of people after him. And if what my friend tells me be true, many weak persons have been so strangely affected by his

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doctrine as to make away with themselves. But why do not the bishops silence him, says the Knight? They cannot, answers *Lactifer*; they have done what they could, by not suffering him to preach in any church or chapel; but taking the advantage of the laws in favour of dissenters, he preaches in the streets and open fields. But does not this extravagant conduct disgust the people, and lessen the number of his followers? No, sir, says *Lactifer*, it has doubled and trebled them. The people of *England* are naturally fond of novelty, and mistaking libertinage for liberty become the more fond of him for his acting in defiance to his lawful prelates. Had he the approbation of them, it is thought, by this time his followers would have been sick of his fanatic doctrine and forsaken him: but contradiction supports his frenzy, and the populace are so blindly led away by him that several men of sense have narrowly escaped with their lives, by daring to express their contempt of him. My friend gave me one instance of this in his own person.

I went, said he, a few days before I left *England*, out of mere curiosity to hear Mr. *Whitefield* hold forth in the fields, and was extremely shock'd to hear him support some odd doctrines he advanced, with an execration more becoming a bully in liquor than a preacher in his senses. His expression was to this effect, *If what I have here said be not true, may all you who hear me rejoice at my damnation.* The hearing so odd an oath from the mouth of a divine in the very midst of his sermon, made me

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me burst into laughter, and say, that if an officer were to have translated that into military *English*, he would have said, *I wish I may be damn'd, if I tell a word of a lye.* This so offended some persons who over-heard me, that they presently set the mob upon me, and it was with the greatest difficulty I escaped from their religious rage. When I was safe, I ask'd a friend I had with me, who were those eye-lifting mortals who had so incensed the populace against me. Be not surprized, said he, they are your devout enthusiasts. I then recall'd to mind that verse of VIRGIL :

——— *Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ?*

Does hell-born rage inhabit heavenly souls?

My friend's story made me recollect a like accident that happen'd to myself before Mr. *W——d* went to *Georgia*. Coming one day out of church from hearing him preach, I saw an elderly woman wringing her hands, and crying out, with tears in her eyes, *I am damn'd! alas! alas! I am damn'd!* Compassion for the poor woman made me approach her, and tell her to make herself easy; for that she would not be the more damn'd for Mr. *W——d*'s telling her so. I imagin'd the woman would have thank'd me for the comfort I endeavour'd to minister to her; but instead of that she call'd me a thousand times *a rogue, a villain, and an atheist*, and obliged me to seek my safety in retreating: upon enquiry into the woman's character I was inform'd that she likewise was an

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enthusiast. Judge then, sir, says *Lactifer*, if I have not reason to know an enthusiast, after having been loaded with injuries by one, for endeavouring to disabuse her, and snatch her from the jaws of despair.

We may hence conceive, says the Knight, how criminal anger is in itself, not only from it's being the effect of an appetite too much indulged, but likewise on account of the fatal consequences ever inseparable from it; for if it does not always break out into menaces, injuries, and vengeance; the reason is, that the fear of punishments sometimes puts a stop to it's external impetuosity; but the angry heart is still inwardly guilty of such injustices.

Do not you think, sir, says *Lactifer*, that anger is in a great measure constitutional? No, says the Knight; constitution may raise a sudden warmth in us; but if the mind and heart are kept in due order, that warmth passes with the rapidity of a meteor, and never kindles into wrath. Observe but a *Spaniard*, is there a more phlegmatic creature upon earth, and yet where is there one more subject to anger? A fonder of himself and his pleasures, he carries every where about him the seed of wrath, which shoots forth on every trivial occasion; and if he but conceits you have affronted him, it costs him no struggle to stab you in the midst of his devotions. Criminal anger then is not the effect of natural warmth, but of self-love alone; for you must remember that we have distinguish'd two sorts of anger, proceeding from two very different kinds of love.

One

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One throws us into disorder, and renders us odious in the sight of God and man; the other is a virtue pleasing to God, and necessarily revered by the very worst of men. For example: The Saviour of the world, spirited with holy wrath, loads the *Scribes*, the *Pharisees*, and the Doctors of the Law, with severe reproaches, for abandoning the Law of *Moses* for their own traditions; for leaving the substance of religion to embrace the shadow of it; and for concealing under the false veil of piety a heart brim-full of iniquity. And is not such anger a real virtue? And have not I reason to think that my own wrath is sanctified by that of our Saviour, if, animated with his Spirit, I say, Woe to you *Scribes* and *Pharisees* of this age, who instruct the people in novelties of your own invention, drawing them from the traditions of the true *Moses*, after having first abandon'd them yourselves. It is true indeed they will put themselves into a rage against me, as they of the Synagogue did against the Redeemer. But these are two very different angers, the one a virtue, the other a crime; because their principles are two loves very opposite to each other.

After thus unfolding the principles of anger, there need only some historical facts to prove the truth of what I have advanced. But because I would not be tedious, I shall content myself with relating to you a short piece of history, which includes an instance of one and the other kind of anger. The scene is in *Spain*.

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In the reign of *Philip* there were many foreigners at *Madrid*, particularly *English*. Among the rest was a young Lord, who shall be nameless. His *English* education gave him an easy behaviour between the sullen solemnity of the *Spaniards*, and the fantastic levity of the *French*: He was a man of fine parts, and the sweetness of his temper added to his accomplish'd breeding, render'd him perfectly agreeable to the ladies; but his most frequent visits were to a lady whose name was *Donna Sylvia*. This lady had two daughters, the eldest was call'd *Leonora*, *Olympia* was the younger. *Leonora* was extremely beautiful, and tho' *Olympia* was fair and handsome, she fell very short of the graces which nature had lavish'd on the person of her sister. However my lord, whose eyes at first were wholly fix'd on *Leonora*, was after some time strongly taken with the lively wit and penetrating genius of *Olympia*. He began to take little notice of *Leonora*, and one sprightly repartee from *Olympia* gave him infinitely more pleasure than all the charms of her sister could.

Leonora soon perceived the alteration in his conduct, and thought herself highly dishonour'd by it; she reproach'd my lord, and express'd her resentment to him. He did not undertake to dissemble with her or disguise his sentiments for *Olympia*, he even extoll'd her merit to her sister, but in such terms as he thought could give no offence. However he was mistaken, and soon learn'd at his cost, that a heart passionately amorous, will not suffer a competitor.

Leonora

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Leonora had another galant, a *Spaniard*, whom she did not love so well as my Lord; however she imagin'd that giving him a feign'd preference might rouse a passion of jealousy in his Lordship; but she was very much surprized to see him continue his addressees to *Olympia*, without troubling himself much with what pass'd between her and her lover. There needed no more to exasperate her to an excess. On one side she saw herself slighted; and on the other, had given her *Spanish* lover some room to hope, contrary to her intention, that she had an inclination for him.

She was resolved to put a stop to any farther conversation between my Lord and her sister, or be revenged on both. One day finding her sister alone, she told her, that she was greatly surprized at her conduct, and could not understand what she could mean by listening to a mere stranger, who made her his addressees only to pass away time. What if he does, says *Olympia*? We are but even gamesters. I find a great deal of wit in him, his conversation is easy and agreeable, and I feel a real pleasure in discoursing with him; and yet if he were to set out to-morrow for *England*, I should be as easy without him, as I was before I knew him. What then, sister, says *Leonora*, you are not in love with him? No, I assure you, says *Olympia*; I am in love with his sprightliness, I am in love with his sense and breeding; but that is all I am in love with, in him.

So sincere a declaration gave *Leonora* a very great satisfaction, and the indifference she per-

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ceived in her sister for the Earl, rekindled her hopes. I must confess, said she to *Olympia*, that I had conceived against you the most outrageous sentiments which slighted love could suggest, and was resolved to make you the victim of my anger. But you restore me my peace by assuring me that you do not love the Earl; towards whom I feel myself pleasingly drawn by a sweet propension, I have not force to resist. Continue, dear sister, to assist me in my love, he undoubtedly loves you, but shun his company, I beseech you, that ceasing to see you, he may forbear to love you. *Olympia* promised to oblige her, which she did the more willingly as she hoped that my Lord, who pay'd his court now wholly to her, would forbear coming to the house when he found he could not see her, and that this would be a means of curing her sister of her weakness.

It happen'd as she foresaw: the Earl forbore coming; yet *Leonora* was but the more in love. She made her sister every kind of reproach, and spared no injurious expressions; thinking she had desired his Lordship to forbear his visits, now she could not see him. *Olympia* tried in vain to clear herself; *Leonora* left her after having vow'd that she should feel the effects of her resentment.

Some days after, *Leonora's* other lover came to pay her a visit; and while he was expressing his passion in the warmest terms he could make use of, she look'd at him with a scornful air, which she was not accusom'd to put on. What faith, said she, can I have in what you say;

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say; what proof did you ever give me of your love? Ah! fair lady, reply'd the lover, I should think myself the happiest of men if I could do any thing capable of convincing you of the excess of my passion. 'Tis with unspeakable anxiety I wait the occasion from your commands. Do but speak; and then judge, whether I love you or not.

Do you know the *English* nobleman, said she, who has been some time here? Yes, said he. Well then, said *Leonora*, know that he has injured me, and it must be your affair to revenge my cause. This said, she retired, and left her lover in a strange perplexity. He knew not what to resolve on: He wish'd to gratify his mistress; yet the fear of the King's hearing that he assaulted the life of a foreign person of quality, who had done him no wrong, greatly intimidated him. However, true *Spaniard* like, he at length resolved to mask himself, and wait in a convenient place to stab him.

Olympia, who had over-heard what her sister had exacted of her lover, was touch'd with compassion, and determin'd to save the Earl's life, whatever might prove the consequence. She wrote him a letter, and slip'd it into his hand herself, when at church. He open'd it, and read the following words:

I Beseech you, sir, not to go out of the church: you will be set upon and murder'd. This notice cannot be liable to suspicion, when you know that it comes from *Olympia*, who had always a regard for you. I will take care to ac-

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quaint your Lordship, when you may go out with safety; and, if occasion require it, will have you attended by a strong guard, to prevent any one's having the power to molest you.

OLYMPIA.

The Earl had follow'd with his looks the veil'd lady who gave him the letter, and seen what part of the church she repair'd to; and learning from the perusal of it, who was the writer of so surprising an epistle, he took out his pocket-book and wrote her this answer.

Fair lady,

***I**S it to hurry me into madness that you honour me with your lines? I thought myself buried in the profoundest oblivion, and yet you flatter me with the hopes of your regard. But if I have room to hope, why am I denied the blessing of seeing you? Know that I dread nothing so much as your scorn; nor can I have any apprehension of all the assassins upon earth in open day. However I will follow your advice, since the greatest bravery is no fence against the treacherous attempts of one coward.*

Yours, &c.

He convey'd his pocket-book to Olympia's hand, and pass'd to another part of the church.

He remain'd alone in the church a considerable time, and no one yet appear'd to inform him, whether it was proper for him to go out or not. He stay'd there 'till evening, and was determin'd

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determin'd to pass the night in the sanctuary, rather than rashly expose himself. But several of his friends missing his Lordship, began to fear lest some sad accident had befallen him; they had often heard him talk of *Leonora* and *Olympia*, and believed it might not be impossible to hear some news of him at their house.

They went thither, and *Olympia*, with her mother's permission, appear'd and acquainted them with the Earl's situation. They no sooner heard it than, taking leave of the young lady, they went to the church and found his Lordship very impatient to see himself in a danger he knew not which way to meet or avoid.

He quitted the church accompanied by his friends, and going out saw an ecclesiastic walking away from them, disturb'd by their numbers. This was *Leonora's* lover, who thought he could not assume a garb more suitable to his purpose, in a country where the ecclesiastical habit commands universal respect. The Earl when he was in safety was again inform'd by his friends that his life was level'd at, but could not learn the reason, *Olympia* having had the prudence to conceal it. *Leonora's* lover finding that it would be no more an easy matter for him to effect his base purpose, it appearing very plain, from his Lordship's long stay in the church, that he had notice given him, resolved to go to his mistress and acquaint her with what had pass'd.

As soon as he appear'd before her, she ask'd him: Well, said she, have you revenged my cause; is my Lord no more in being? I know
not,

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not, fair lady, said he, what cursed fiend obstructs my happiness, and the pleasure I propose in serving you. The Earl has undoubtedly had intimations of my design, for he never left the church 'till late in the evening, and accompanied by several gentlemen who came to fetch him; so that I should have been destroy'd, if I had been rash enough to attack him. But I shall meet with some more favourable opportunity, and then you will see whether——Go, you coward, says *Leonora*, interrupting him, you are not worthy my regard, who are so fearful for yourself. She said no more; but hastily turn'd her back on him, and went away.

Donna Sylvia, who was a stranger to *Leonora's* sentiments, thought to give her a pleasure in acquainting her with the danger the Earl had been in, and the manner of his delivery. But when she mention'd the notice *Olympia* had given to his friends, who came to enquire after him, *Leonora's* colour immediately changed, fury flash'd in her eyes, and passion sat livid in every feature. What means this sudden alteration in your countenance, says *Donna Sylvia*? One would think you were displeased at the news I give you. Madam, says *Leonora*, I must be wholly void of sensation to listen coolly to what you tell me. It is a long time since I first took notice of the too great intimacy between the Earl and my sister; but what you have now acquainted me with, leaves me no room to doubt of it any longer. What then, says the mother, have you observed any thing to pass between them contrary to the rules of perfect

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perfect decorum? I do not know, says *Leonora*, at present; but I will watch them more narrowly, and shall be better able to inform you hereafter.

Leonora went directly to her sister's apartment, and spoke to her as if she had been very glad to hear of the Earl's escape. But *Olympia* convinced of the contrary gave her so significant a look, that *Leonora* could not but perceive her indignation; and that she might have no room to doubt of it, *Olympia* confirm'd it with words. Are you not ashamed, *Leonora*, says she, to aim at the life of a foreigner, who has never injured you, and from whom you have never received any thing but utmost civility? I never doubted of your love for him and was more convinced of it, than perhaps you imagin'd me to be, when you desired me to forbear seeing him. Complaisance made me acquiesce to your desire, in hopes of moderating your passion, but what fury has now possess'd you; is it love, is it hatred, is it rage? For I know not what to impute your extravagance to.

Olympia! Olympia! says the angry sister, labour not to dissemble what is too plain to be seen; you would not take my Lord's part with so much warmth, if your love for him was not extreme. Do I love him, say you; and pray, says *Olympia*, since when are lovers, absented from the object they delight in, in so perfect a calm as I enjoy? Am I not the same you have always seen me; when did you hear me sigh, or see one tear tremble in my eye? I own I inform'd him of the danger his person was in,
and

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and should I not have done the same office to the meereſt ſtranger in life?

You ſaw him then, ſays *Leonora*? Yes, anſwer'd *Olympia*, you forced me to it, by your conſpiration againſt him. I, ſays *Leonora*! Yes, you, you yourſelf, whoſe heart was to be the recompence, ſays *Olympia*, of the murder you charged your lover with? Be not amazed at my warmth, or rather my anger, if you chuſe to call it ſo; an attempt ſo contrary to humanity is enough to make nature revolt.

Leonora, very much exaſperated againſt her ſiſter, left the room bent upon revenge; ſhe went and made her complaint to her mother of *Olympia*'s manner of treating her. But inſtead of telling her of the reproaches her ſiſter had made her, ſhe only talk'd of the pretended love ſhe had for the Earl; and added, that *Olympia* had even confeſt, that ſhe had had private interviews with him. There needed no more to prejudice the mother againſt *Olympia*, and make her think of putting the young lady into a monaſtery. However, ſhe would not reſolve on any thing 'till ſhe firſt ſpoke to her in particular, and learn'd from her own mouth, what were her intentions with regard to the Earl; for upon the credit ſhe had given to *Leonora*, ſhe made no doubt of *Olympia*'s loving him. Accordingly ſhe ſent for her.

You know, daughter, ſaid ſhe, that it is not the cuſtom of our country for young ladies to conſerſe with gentlemen ſo freely. Indeed the *French* monarch, who now ſits on the throne of *Spain*, obliges us to relax a little in this particular

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lar, to conform to the manners of the court. And for my own part I have hitherto complied with the present mode, with so much the less difficulty, as I always depended upon your discretion; and is it possible I should be deceived?

I am at a loss, madam, says *Olympia* to comprehend your meaning in this speech. This I know, that I have neither changed my sentiments, nor alter'd my conduct; and if any one be bold enough to accuse me of either, I fancy I have it amply in my power to confound my accuser. But speak plainly, madam, I intreat you: Is not the *English* Lord the person in question? Her mother was going to make her a reply, when word was brought that the Earl was at the gate, with several other noblemen, who requested the honour of admittance. They were introduced, and the young Lord was not more charm'd to meet *Olympia* in her mother's apartment, than *Olympia* was to see him there once more. The occasion was very favourable of setting the matter clear, and *Olympia* took care not to let it slip.

After the first civilities the Earl address'd himself to his deliverer in these words: I have not forgotten, madam, the tacit commands you lay'd upon me to see you no more; your keeping yourself unseen, whenever I had the honour of admittance here, was sufficient to make me comprehend that my presence was troublesome to you. I submitted to your pleasure, in staying away, with exactness enough to merit your pardon for this intruding visit; which I could not omit, without being wanting to the gratitude

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tude I owe you. But for you, fair creature, I should not perhaps be alive; and therefore must be the most ungrateful of men, not to make a public acknowledgment of it. Permit me then to return you thanks for a care I am so little worthy of from you. And oh! by your goodness, I intreat you, teach me how to be more deserving your favours: I am prepared for every trial you can put me to.

These expressions were so opposite to the ill opinion which *Leonora* tried to give her mother of her sister's conduct, that Donna *Sylvia* thought fit to make her appear, the better to convince her of her false notion. She came into her mother's apartment, while *Olympia* was answering the Earl's address in these words: I am very glad, my Lord, to think your life is in safety: And ought I not to deem it the greatest of satisfactions that I was so fortunate to contribute towards the preservation of it? No more then, I beseech you, of your pretended unworthiness, or the means of deserving my regard; I am not ignorant of the universal esteem your merit has procured you, and that alone was sufficient to incline me to exert myself for your safety.

The Earl, not knowing how great a share *Leonora* had had in the conspiracy against him, loaded her with civility; but remorse of conscience threw her into the utmost confusion. She blush'd, then turn'd pale, falter'd in her words, began again to speak, and at last knew not how to give utterance to meaning. *Olympia* perceiving the disorder she was in, drew her

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her out of her perplexity, by speaking herself to the Earl. I esteem myself extremely happy, my Lord, to have contributed towards prolonging your days, said she. I am persuaded that your death would have brought upon our country the universal hatred of all nations, but particularly of the *English*. Ah, fair lady, says the Earl, my life is of so little moment in the world, that no one would have given himself any concern about the manner of my death. But such a life as it is, lovely creature, you have preserved it, to you it is due, and to you I offer it, if the presumption be not too great. *Olympia's* modesty raised a blush in her face, and rage and passion overspread *Leonora's* with reddening warmth; for in reality her ill-will to my Lord was only love carried to extravagance.

Donna Sylvia was able to give her daughters very considerable fortunes, and the Earl was as considerable for his. These considerations, join'd to the circumstances of this young nobleman's deliverance, induced his friends, at his instance, to ask *Olympia* for him in marriage. The mother did not seem disinclined to the proposal, and even requested my Lord to repeat his visits frequently, which he promised with pleasure to acquiesce to.

They were scarcely got out of the house, when *Leonora* had lock'd herself up in her own room; but *Donna Sylvia* went thither to her to reproach her with her levity in believing of her sister what appear'd so contrary. At first she received no answer but tears, but when she extol'd the Earl's merit, and the honourable alliance

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alliance he proposed, *Leonora* could hold no longer. Well, said she, even let *Olympia* marry him; they both shall perish, or I will myself. What do I hear, says the mother; what means this rage which possesses my child? Ah! Ah! says *Leonora* — Go on, dear daughter, said the mother. Yes, said she, I will go on, I have no more measures to keep. Have you forgot, madam, that all the Earl's addresses were at first to me alone; I have been weak enough to love him, and ought he to have shewn me how much he is worth if his heart is not for me? He is a traitor, he gives me up for my sister, but I shall know how to be revenged on them both.

All that Donna *Sylvia* could say would not suffice to moderate the fury of her daughter, she flipt away from her, and went to find her sister, whom she threaten'd with death, if she refused to give her up her lover. How, says *Olympia*, would you have me give up what I have not? Besides, can you call a man your lover whom you tried to assassinate? Ah, says *Leonora*, if he had died, I should have stab'd the murderer first, and then myself would have revenged his death upon myself. But I do not hate you less than I should hate a murderer of him; either must give death to me, but you in the most cruel manner of the two. Calm your anger, sister, says *Olympia*, I give him up to you, and wish he may marry you. What, says *Leonora*, is it possible that you give him up to me, and who will assure me of his love? Ah! you only give him up, because you are sure of his
his

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his heart. Alas! Alas! was there ever despair like mine! *Olympia* left the room, and went to acquaint her mother with the violent state her sister was in. *Donna Sylvia*, unable to conceive that the love the most excessive could have such extravagant effects of fury, fancied that her daughter might probably have some dangerous illness, whose cure might more properly belong to a physician. Accordingly one was sent for, she was put to bed, and when he came he found her in a high fever, a fever undoubtedly occasion'd by excess of passion.

The next day the Earl fail'd not his visit to *Olympia*, but found her so very cast down, that he was equally struck with surprize and concern. She gave him for the reason of her dullness, her sister's sickness; which, she said, gave her so much the more grief, as it appear'd to be of a dangerous nature. The doctor came in at this juncture, *Donna Sylvia* conducted him to *Leonora's* apartment, and *Olympia* seized the opportunity to let the Earl into her thoughts.

Be not surprized, my Lord, said she, at what I am going to say to you. I am not insensible of the greatness of your merit, nor wanting in acknowledgment or gratitude for the advantageous disposition you are in towards me. But if you love me, you have no other way to prove your love than by marrying my sister. You shock me extremely, fair creature, says my Lord. What can you mean by desiring me to wed a woman I do not love, because I love you? Surely you only mean to try me? No, says *Olympia*, I am serious; my sister loves you
to

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to a degree too great for expression; your conversation, your good breeding, your sense and temper, in a word, all in you charms her, and should you wed any other, she would infallibly die with despair. Perhaps, my Lord, says she, I ought to conceal my sister's passion, but in this country we are so little accusom'd to the free, easy, and engaging manner of you foreign gentlemen, that I am satisfied every one as well as she would be caught by so accomplish'd a person as yourself. She had not time to say more, the physician return'd to them, and brought them an account that *Leonora* was very ill, but however that he did not despair of working her cure.

When the doctor was gone, the Earl would have taken leave of *Donna Sylvia*, to muse more at liberty on what *Olympia* had been telling him; but the lady stop'd him to know the cause of that concern she discover'd in his looks. The respect I owe you, madam, says my Lord, will not permit me to dissemble any thing to you. I must confess to you then, that I am of all lovers the most unfortunate; doom'd to fly and renounce what I love, and compel'd to love what I have not the power of loving. You know, madam, there is no giving laws to the heart; and I know no greater grievance in life than constraint in love. Pray, my Lord, says *Donna Sylvia*, explain yourself, for all you have been saying is a riddle to me.

He glanced a moment at *Olympia* to learn from her eyes whether he had her permission or not to say any more; she look'd a consent, and

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and he, turning again to her mother, went on: I shall always, madam, entertain the profoundest respect for all which belongs to you; for Lady *Leonora* in particular I have all the regard imaginable; but there is a wide distance between esteem and love. What has real merit must be esteem'd, reason so directs: but is it in the power of the heart to devote itself to an object which appears only estimable? Love is blind, and though it may be guided, is not to be controul'd by reason, when once it is grown to the excess with which I adore *Olympia*. Nevertheless, madam, I am commanded to wed *Leonora*; is it your authority has pronounced this dread sentence so fatal to my peace. No, my Lord, said she, I cannot understand you: if *Olympia* is so happy as to please you, I consent to ——— Ah, madam, says the Earl, I breathe again, and am infinitely obliged to you for detaining me from going away.

Madam, says *Olympia*, 'twas I myself gave occasion to what his Lordship has said to you. You know my sister's disposition towards him; I need say no more. You are sensible how dear she is to me, and therefore cannot wonder at my preferring her happiness to my own. Yes, my Lord, continued she, turning towards the Earl, my felicity would have been to pass my life with you, since my mother was pleased to approve of it; but ——— No more, fair lady, I beseech you: so perfect a generosity is too plain a proof that you are not in love. I love, said she, yes, my Lord, I do love; but my love is not a-kin to madness. I make all give way to
reason

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reason as much as in me lies; and though but a girl, I would chuse to die in my prime, rather than live to become a slave to any one passion. Nothing, says the Earl, can be more heroic than these sentiments; but you will allow, they are far from being advantageous to me. I perceive; lovely creature, that posselt of so much reason, you will live with ease deprived of the object which has had the good fortune to please you; but do you think it equally supportable to be for ever link'd to an object I cannot love?

This conversation was broken off by several persons coming to condole with Donna *Sylvia* on her daughter's illness, and the Earl withdrew. He knew not well what he had to do, however he resolved to come to no fix'd determination, 'till he saw the event of *Leonora's* illness. If she should die, said he, all my difficulties are over; and should she recover, who knows but jealousy may cause some alteration in *Olympia's* sentiments.

He omitted not the next day to return and enquire after her health, and I know not whether he was overpleased or not to hear that she was out of danger. As soon as she was inform'd that he was in the house, she sent to entreat him to come and see her. He could possibly find no pretext to decline the visit. He went therefore to her bed-side, but with all the repugnance imaginable, expecting to be loaded with reproaches. But how great was his surprize to hear her hold a quite opposite discourse.

My

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My Lord, said she, will you forgive me all the mischief I try'd to do you? Fair lady, says the Earl, I believe you incapable of harm to any one, and therefore cannot comprehend your meaning. Ah, said she, I am more criminal than you think for, or even than I believed myself. Love alone was the suggerer of all my mis-conduct, and blinded me too closely to let me perceive it. But the raging fever I have lately had, has weaken'd passion to make way for reason. I am now sensible of the sad effects of too great an attachment: happy they who can keep themselves free from it! I imagin'd, my Lord, that you despised the love I bore you; I imagin'd you despised even myself, and love soon was converted to hatred. You are not sure ignorant of the extremity to which anger hurry'd me against you. Has not my sister told you of it? No, madam, says the Earl, upon my honour, she has told me nothing; neither can I guess what you mean. Ah, says *Leonora*, I deserve nothing from you but your aversion; and my sister, my sister alone is worthy to possess you. A flood of tears fell from her eyes, and pathetically spoke the sincerity of her repentance.

The Earl used his utmost endeavours to console her, but his engaging speeches served only to augment her anguish. Alas, my Lord, said she, if you knew me well, you would perhaps forbear speaking to me in so obliging a manner, and treat me as the most abandon'd of creatures. In a word, I must confess to you, that the contempt with which you seem'd to

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treat

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treat me, push'd me to the last extremity, because the passion I felt for you was itself extreme. I, my Lord, I was the person who level'd at your life; I was the traitress who mean'd to cut off so fine a thread; and the same tongue which now makes this sincere acknowledgment, was that which pronounced the guilty sentence against you.

The Earl remain'd interdicted at these words, and immoveable as marble, knew not what answer to make; but *Leonora* had not concluded. Nay, my Lord, continued she, still weeping, I went still farther: and my sister, my dear, my deserving sister was devoted a victim to my rage, because I was more than persuaded that you had a tenderness for her. Oh wretched, wretched love! To what evils dost thou not expose us? This, my Lord, is the sum of what I had to say to you; and if the sincerest acknowledgment and most poignant repentance can obtain the forgiveness of crimes, no one has a greater right than I have to hope, that you will pardon the criminal I accuse.

Fair lady, says the Earl, tho' I may not thank you for having conspired against my life, yet since the love you honour'd me with was the cause of that attempt, do I not owe you all the gratitude in nature? Ah, my Lord, said she, cease from gallantry, I beseech you. Such, such were the magic speeches which seduced me first; I must, I will shun you; for tho' at present my sentiments are alter'd, it is fit I should for ever be apprehensive of you. How wretched indeed should I be, if, sensible again to the emotions

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motions of love, I should fall again a slave to fury? Farewel, my Lord, may every darling delight, every pleasing prosperity attend you with my sister; I know she is worthy all your attention, and am convinced you will be perfectly blest in her. The Earl return'd her his thanks in the most respectful manner, and withdrew; he return'd to the chamber, where he was before, and where Donna *Sylvia* and the lovely *Olympia* were waiting for him with inexpressible impatience.

You may judge, sir, says the Knight to *Lactifer*, in what an air and posture of astonishment the Earl must appear: he was some minutes near the ladies, and seem'd insensible of it. Where are you then, my Lord, says *Olympia* to him? I was with you, lovely creature, said he; and more happy with you than you can conceive. You alledged no more the difficulties you made me yesterday, you threw no more obstacles in my way to bliss. If you look on what I say as a dream, you have it in your power to realize the vision; you may do it, fair lady, without altering in the least the heroic sentiments you express'd to me so lately. In a word, there is no room now for you to insist on my marrying your sister, the lady gives me up to you.

My Lord, says *Olympia*, I am not my own mistress, my mother's pleasure shall ever be decisive with me. But tell me, if you please, how my sister came to change her mind so suddenly? The Earl repeated all the obliging things *Leonora* had spoken of her sister, and her many kind wishes to her and himself; but took care

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to conceal the article of her conspiracy, which lady *Sylvia* her mother did not know her to have had any hand in. *Olympia*, her mother, and my Lord were jointly rejoiced to find they had no more obstacles in their way, and agree'd together upon celebrating the marriage as soon as *Leonora* recover'd.

The Earl, having *Leonora* now no longer for an enemy, thought himself secure from every accident, but he was greatly mistaken. It was no sooner known in the town that *Olympia* was engaged to him, than a gentleman declared himself his rival. This *Spaniard* had long been in love with *Olympia*, but not having fortune enough to think of marrying her yet, he waited the death of a very rich uncle, to whom he was heir, to ask her in marriage. When he heard that a foreigner was to possess the charming creature, whom he so tenderly loved; he was seized with violent rage, and vented a thousand injurious expressions and bitter menaces against all the *English* in general, but chiefly against my Lord. This came to the Earl's ear, but he look'd upon the whole as *Spanish* bravadoes not worth his notice. However one day, when he thought on it the least, going up to Donna *Sylvia*'s house, he was attack'd by a man of very good appearance, under the pretext of his not saluting him. His Lordship excused himself, and endeavour'd to pacify the *Spaniard*, with assuring him that he had not seen him; but finding the Don resolved not to hear reason, he was obliged to draw in his own defence; however another *Spaniard* of a party
with

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with the former, gave him a thrust behind with his sword, and wounded him. He recover'd himself, and would fain have taken satisfaction, but by this time the *Spaniards* walk'd off. He had just strength enough to gain his lodging, where a surgeon was sent for, who dress'd his wound, but without being able yet to inform him whether it was mortal or not.

Several days past, and *Olympia* heard no news of his Lordship. She had been inform'd of what had happen'd at her gate, but knew not that the Earl was a party concern'd. In the mean time *Leonora* recover'd, and great diligence was used in preparing *Olympia's* wedding-cloaths, but nothing yet was heard of the Earl, who was too ill to acquaint them with his situation, without apprehension of giving uneasiness to *Olympia*. Donna *Sylvia* the mother was now persuaded that he had abandon'd her daughter, and knew not what method of revenge to resolve on. I need not tell you, sir, what extremities passion will push a woman to, who thinks herself imposed upon; this lady's was hurrying towards extravagance, and she thought to have the Earl seized under a pretext of her own invention. But one of her friends gave her to understand that moderation was necessary in an affair in which she was not yet certain, whether his Lordship was guilty or innocent; and that he would make it his business to come to the speech of him.

Accordingly he went the next day, and was agreeably surprized to hear that the Earl, having been desperately wounded, was now happily out

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of danger. This news gave Donna *Sylvia* a very different turn of mind from that she was in before. Her anger and hatred were changed into affection and compassion, and the lady sent frequently every day to enquire after his Lordship's health, 'till he was perfectly recover'd, and capable of giving them personal assurances of it. The marriage was solemnized in a short time, and the Earl return'd to *England* with his lovely wife.

All the passions which are display'd in this history, says *Lactifer*, have nothing singular in them. I see there that love is ever the source of anger; but whence is it that such kinds of strokes, which are frequently met with in history, make no more impression on the minds of readers? The reason of this is, says the Knight, that men in general, stop at the object which strikes them, without searching into the origin of it. A man in anger sets his imagination to work, weighs the ideas his anger suggests, but seeks not the cause of so violent a passion. Another man in anger, perhaps, is a subject of horror to him; and therefore if he were acquainted with the cause of such an odious passion, he would labour to root out of his own breast the principle of what he detests in others. This, in my opinion, is the principal fruit to be reap'd from history. But after all, sir, do you imagin that anger would appear in so horrible a light, if it was not to appear outwardly. Is a man of avarice less detestable in himself than the man of wrath? And yet the vice of the former of these two makes not the least impression on the
mind

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mind of your readers of history. They are contented with saying, 'tis a covetous creature; but because anger strikes the senses externally, no terms are thought strong enough to express the horror conceived of it.

Do you imagin then, says *Lactifer*, that avarice is a crime equal to anger? It is now too late, says the Knight, to say any thing upon that head at present. But, sir, if you design me the favour of your company to-morrow at our usual hour, the discussion of that point may afford us fresh matter of entertainment in our next interview.

End of the fifth conversation.



CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

Sixth CONVERSATION.

THE Knight coming to the walks found *Lactifer* in so profound a musing, that he pass'd before him unobserved. When he recover'd from the absence of mind he seem'd to be in, the Knight obligingly ask'd him if he might be indulg'd the liberty to ask the subject of his intense application. I was thinking, says *Lactifer*, on the matter which is to make the subject of this afternoon's conversation; and tho' I perfectly conceive how great a crime there is in avarice, yet I cannot comprehend how it can come up to anger.

The reflections of a few minutes, sir, says the Knight, will not suffice undoubtedly to make you comprehend it: it is necessary to apply diligent study, and to follow step by step a covetous man, in order to learn from his conduct
what

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what avarice is. It is certain indeed that a perfect idea of this vice would make you fully sensible what kind of odd creature a man must be, who is a slave to it; but it is a thorough experience of his manners, which must bring you acquainted with that. What idea do you form of a covetous man?

As I take it, sir, says *Lactifer*, a covetous man is one who aims at nothing but heaping riches, and often robs himself of necessities to increase the sums he has laid together. So most people think, as well as you, says the Knight; but according to this notion there would be no avarice except among the rich, and I pretend that a beggar may be to the full as covetous as the most wealthy banker in *England*. How can that be, says *Lactifer*; What should be the object of a beggar's avarice? The very same as makes a rich man covetous, says the Knight. Think not that riches make the miser; a man may be immensely rich, without being tainted with avarice, as another may be extremely poor and yet be infected with it's utmost excess.

This, sir, is the idea I form of a miser: He is a man who has a sovereign love for the goods he possesses, whether those goods be great, in a degree of mediocrity, or of very little worth. This definition is short, but comprehensive. It is possible to love the goods of fortune, to make a legitimate use of them; but that is not avarice: To love them sovereignly, to be strongly attach'd to them, to make them the great object of the soul, to labour at heaping them for the sake of them; this, this is avarice. And do

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not you easily perceive that a beggar may have the same attachment to, the same love for, the little he possesses, as a rich man to, and for, his wealth? For you must still take this with you, that it is not the abundance, but the abundant love of riches, which makes a man covetous.

I confess my ignorance, says *Lactifer*; I am not perfectly acquainted with this matter: for I have never had any other idea of a miser, than what I took from *Moliere's* comedy, which bears that title. That is no just idea of it, sir, says the Knight: for tho' the piece you speak of is a master performance in it's kind, yet it characterises only the exterior actions of a covetous man; whereas the principles from which he acts are what we should sound, there lurks the avarice.

I see, sir, says *Lactifer*, you search after this passion in the very essence, without which indeed we can never go beyond a superficial knowledge of it: still I do not understand rightly, why you will have the love of riches in a covetous man to be a sovereign love.

It is very true, says the Knight, that this love may be more or less great; since it is certain that a man may be more or less covetous; but whatever degree such love is in, it is ever a sovereign love; with the sole difference of being greater or less. For the miser is not content with barely using, but must enjoy riches, or the goods he possesses; *that is*, to speak in the phrase of divines, he dwells in them; in a word, he makes his God of them.

Does

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Does not this expression, sir, says *Lactifer*, appear to you a little harsh? I see plainly, says the Knight, that you have not made it your study to be perfectly acquainted with this vice. No, sir, I do not exaggerate in the least; but you yourself will own I do not, very shortly. What is loving GOD? Is it not to give him what belongs to him? Is it not, to apply all our thoughts, all the faculties of the soul to do homage to that supreme being? Is it not, to consecrate all the emotions of the heart to him; in a word, to give ourselves wholly up to him? Now the miser thinks on nothing but heaping up wealth; his heart is in his strong-box, and his great attention is placed in securing it from being taken from him; because in reality according to his narrow notion, he knows no other providence than the contents of it, in which he places all his affection.

Is not this, sir, making a GOD of riches? Farther, if he is insensible that he ought to place his trust in Providence, which is GOD himself; and places it on the contrary in the heaps of wealth himself has made, daily augmenting them from the same principles; is not this again making a GOD of riches? We cannot doubt of it, sir: *St. Paul* is my warrant, who, in the third chapter of his epistle to the *Colossians*, treats avarice as idolatry.

This is so much the more easy to comprehend, as it is natural to the vicious propension man has to be corrupted by every attachment to the creature. It is impossible to touch pitch without sullyng the fingers, or to carry fire in

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the naked palm without burning the hand. Does not the Saviour of the world hint as much to us, when he says, *That it is as hard for a rich man to be saved, as it is for a camel to pass thro' the eye of a needle*: Not that it is a crime to be rich; but because it is almost impossible for a man to possess riches and not be attach'd to them. Now it is impossible to be saved with such an attachment; in which it is so much the more easy to persevere, as the invisibility of it, to men's eyes, screens us from their reproaches.

I already perceive, says *Lactifer*, how much the vice of avarice exceeds that of anger in the guilt and danger of it. Anger indeed proceeds from predominant self-love, but it's own violence must put bounds to it in some measure; whereas the tranquillity of avarice, and it's progress, may render it permanent.

You will perceive the difference between them still more clearly, says the Knight, if you but examin into the circumstances and consequences of avarice. This vice is ever attended with cruelty. A poor man weeping reveals his misery to a covetous one; he tells him of his numerous family and tender babes, whom he cannot supply with bread. But do we not daily see the merciless miser, not only insensible to his fellow-creature's misery, but even basely bent on loading CHRIST with injuries, in the person of the poor, who struggles to gain a sustenance for his indigent family and self. Another miser more humane, or rather less barbarous, shall give an alms. of the minutest coin: in vain is he told, that even
much

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much more will not suffice to supply the pressing wants of this poor family, and that the poor are co-heirs with him to his inheritance, of which he is debtor to them for the superfluous part, by order of heaven. This truth is ever an incomprehensible and incredible mystery to a miser, who never thinks he has any thing superfluous.

It is certain then that cruelty ever waits on avarice. Let us examin into a miser's-conduct with regard to his own family, we shall still find him inhuman. His children are corrupted and ruin'd, for want of education; and their morals depraved, by their being reduced to procure from others the necessaries, which the cruel parent denies. The son turns libertin and the daughter a prostitute; and to avoid such disorders he cannot resolve to untye one of his mouldy bags of gold. Was there ever greater barbarity? And yet because it has not a bloody aspect, his dulness suffers him not to be shock'd at it. But let us consider avarice in it's consequences.

I am engaged in a law-suit; which, being a christian, I pursue contrary to my inclinations. I fear a brother's enmity who is the plantiff, and would gladly give him up the cause, but am not master of my fortune, because I have a wife and children. I defend my suit then, and fee counsel, but my adversary's purse is longer than mine, 'tis with difficulty my counsel can have a hearing, and in a word for form's sake only my cause is brought before the judge. However, I lose it; and have for my only comfort the law of the eternal, given by Je-
thro

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thro to *Moses*. I see the judges corrupted like those of *Israel*, the charms of a bag makes them forget their duty; and I lose my right, because avarice gains possession of the heart of him whose office is to do me justice. The decree is no sooner given but my whole family is made desolate, my wife and children are deprived of bread, as I am of the means of giving them any, and the unjust judge, who rob'd me of my right, robs me of the liberty of complaining; since his injustice would carry him even to persecute me, if I should presume to say he judged me inequitably.

You remind me, sir, says *Lactifer*, of what the Apostle says in his first epistle to *Timothy*, that they who are eager after riches, fall into temptation and the snare of *Satan*, that they are burden'd with foolish desires, which lead men into their destruction, because the thirst of riches is the root of every evil.

Nothing more certain than this truth, says the Knight, do but recall to mind, sir, what happen'd some years ago in *England*, and the evils then occasion'd by avarice. The wound keeps bleeding to this day, and there is no looking on it without concern. What fury, what rage boil'd in the veins of the *English*! Ought they not to have blush'd to hear a pagan reproach his own cotemporaries, with what themselves, tho' professing at least exteriorly the christian religion, were actually guilty of in the eyes of the whole universe? How could they without a blush reflect on that of *VIRGIL*, *Æneid*. l. iii. y 56.

Quid

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—— *Quid non mortalia pectora cogis,
Auri sacra fames?*

O sacred thirst for all-commanding gold!
What mortal breast is not by thee controul'd.

and to what extremity did not the same inordinate thirst of riches bring the whole kingdom of *France*? But what wonder that both should become the ridicule of the rest of *Europe*, when both were equally enslaved by avarice, and alike eager after their own destruction.

True, sir, says *Lactifer*, yet in my opinion the folly of the *English* was the more flagrant of the two; who, tho' they had seen but a year before the fatal effects of avarice in the *French*, were rash enough to run into the very extravagance for which they had ridiculed their neighbours. But the same covetous spirit drew, from all parts and nations in *Europe* to *London*, Fools of the same stamp, who probably were waiting a favourable opportunity to gratify their insatiable appetite for riches. Gain was a charm they could not withstand, or rather would not; and all the morality of a christian, which forbid them the unlawful commerce, had no power with them in comparison of the thousands which glitter'd in the magic treasury of *Exchange-Alley*. So that if the ridicule was general the subjects of it were almost equally so.

This puts me in mind of an officer, who wanting to exchange some notes which had been paid away to him, went to a famous money-scrivener
near

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near the *Change*. It was on a *Sunday* he went first to talk with him about the matter.

The usurer after some conversation beg'd the officer's company to church with him. The officer immediately concluded him to be a man of religion and honesty, and readily comply'd. The preacher was upon the subject of usury, and the officer extremely delighted with the doctrine and eloquence of his sermon, imagin'd that the scrivener, tho' he should have been a usurer, must be converted after hearing a discourse, wherein the baseness of usury was so fully proved; and therefore doubted not but he should be honestly dealt with. But he was surpris'd to hear his chap say to him, with a smile, coming out of church: every man to his trade: the parson has been at his to day, and to morrow we will mind ours, sir, if you please. In fact the next day he made him lose fifty *per Cent.* in the discount.

There is nothing extraordinary in this, says the Knight, it happens daily. But the commerce of the *Mississipi* and *South-Sea* are so much the more to be wonder'd at, as it is hard to say which was carried to the greatest extravagance in them, folly or knavery. Do you imagin then, sir, says *Lactifer*, that stock-jobbing was or is unlawful?

I own, says the Knight, that commerce in general is not contrary to the law of the gospel; but can we say the same of your *South-Sea* stocks whose whole fund consists in the fogs which hover over the *Thames*. What is your *South-Sea* trade but a bubble? Now to render
commerce

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commerce lawful, the fund must be real; the money I give for this fund must be alienated, and the fund appropriated; and to draw a more than legal interest there must be hazard. These are fundamental principles of commerce: *Lucre ceasing, or danger of loss arising.*

Shall we find these conditions in the *South-Sea* commerce, in the funds of your *Exchange-Alley*, which were and are nothing more than an empty chimera, a meer bubble? The fund of the stock-jobbers cannot be alienated, where there is nothing to alienate. And the first stocks which gave birth to this pernicious commerce, were only the work of fiction. The money which circulated was the money of the people, who had paper in exchange; it could not then belong to a company or set of directors: besides what risk could be run with the property of others? For it is very well known that the first managers of this villainous traffic were men of nothing, men of little credit and less worth. What more can be wanting to demonstrate that this commerce was a manifest robbery, authorised only by universal avarice.

It must be confest, says *Lactifer*, that the spirit of avarice in the publick was great, and I cannot help thinking that those adventurers were something a-kin to your Alchymists, who are in search of the philosopher's Stone. A great deal of hopes in the beginning, and some success in the process, flatters them, but in the end all is dissipated and lost in smoke. Wherefore Alchymy is defined, *an art without*

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out art, whose beginning consists in falshood, whose pursuit requires hard labour, and whose end is attended with beggary. This was the true character of the *South-Sea-year* stock-jobbers. And yet as there have been fools great enough to follow Alchymy, and covetously to pursue it's principles till reduced to the want of bread; would you believe too, that there were not wanting many persons of the first distinction, who from the same principle ruin'd themselves and their families.

What you say, seems to be spoken with an air of astonishment, says the Knight. I own it, says *Lactifer*, it seems to me like a dream or a fairy tale, for I can find nothing in it which has an air of reality, real as it is, but the extravagance of human appetite. Man has long been corrupted to an excess: that does not surprise me; but that he should enslave reason, good sense, and decency to so mean a vice as avarice, and in so abject a manner, is what I never can think of without astonishment. The facts you wonder at so much are nothing in comparison of one which you overlook, because foreign to your own country, says the Knight. What do you think of that projector who first lay'd the plan of those bubbles in *France*? I suppose, says *Lactifer*, the person you hint at is the famous *Laws*, out-law'd in *England*, and banish'd from every other kingdom, except *France*, whose superior avarice gave him entrance.

Yes, sir, says the Knight, this is the man I mean, who occasion'd so many disorders. Can you
you

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you comprehend what could possess *France* to receive into her bosom a stranger, who level'd at her ruin? Or what could withhold her from revenging the treachery on it's author?

I see nothing supernatural in this, says *Lactifer*: It was much less surprising to a foreigner than it had been to one of it's own natives. For surely had a *Frenchman* attempted the like scheme, he would have been much more worthy the vengeance of the public than Mr. *Law*, who was a foreigner, and whose crime was consequently less unnatural than that of a man who connives at the ruin of his own country, and shares in the plunder of it. It is much less then to be comprehended, how *France* should, in a former reign, be so tame as to suffer a wretch to go unpunish'd, who, being at the helm of affairs, could wink at as criminal a scheme as either the *South Sea* or *Mississippi*, and enrich himself by consenting to the total impoverishment of the state; and the mystery is so much the greater, as that kingdom was, at that very time, illustrious for the great parts and superior geniuses of many of it's members, and especially of the most august bodies of it.

And yet, sir, says the Knight, you see it was possible for that kingdom, so famous for it's spirit, to tolerate such a rotten member? But the reason is plain: those illustrious and superior geniuses you talk of were tainted too. The members of those august bodies were equally criminal. Nevertheless the profound respect which is due to the most august body of all, in that nation, will not suffer me to suspect that any of
it's

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it's members could be glad of sharing in the perfidy; and, if they were, it is plain they acted with so much circumspection, that the honour of the body was not wounded. And yet it is surprising how the baseness of this parricide could remain unpunish'd: for he not only sold the nation with impunity then, but did the same during his whole administration. Where is the surprise, sir, says *Lactifer*; his business was to get as many of the first distinction into his interest as might screen him from justice, and enable him to wound her thro' the sides of her constitution, unseen. For this purpose he introduced and encouraged luxury among the Great, and, having the public money in his own hands, created himself as many dependents as his cunning reduced to desperate fortunes. By this means he could break thro' the laws when he pleased; project laws contrary to the national constitution, and detrimental to the liberty and welfare of the people, as he pleased; and still remain safe from the effects of public hatred; having always a * majority sufficient to carry any thing he contrived, in spite of the few public-spirited lovers of their country, who had honesty enough to oppose him. What, indeed, made his proceedings seem the most extraordinary, was the meanness of his native rank. He was a man, adds *Lactifer*, of inferior extraction, whose ambition and cunning combined to lift him above all the quality in the kingdom. And did not the nobility wink at the disorders of this minion of

* This happen'd before the ancient constitution of *France* was overturn'd.

fortune,

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fortune, for all that, says the Knight? It must be own'd, fir, says *Lactifer*, that the most ancient, wise, and virtuous among them despised and detested him, and made a generous tho' unsuccessful stand against him; but the mob of them not only connived at, but were subservient even to his dirtiest work. However you may wonder at this, fir, adds the Knight; lay but honour and honesty aside, and I will soon make it familiar to you. This great minion, as you observed yourself, and history records, had the public money at his disposal, the gift of innumerable places and pensions at his pleasure, and withal was the first in the secret of what may be call'd the stock-jobbing of that age, having the rise and fall of the coin at his beck. What then more proper or effectual to secure the dependence of persons, whose luxury and extravagance had loaded them with penury and debt, and the lustre of whose title but served to place their poverty in a more glaring light? To such he proposed his projects; and the dust of riches thrown in their eyes blinded them, and obstructed their seeing the infamy to which they exposed themselves by becoming creatures to one so inferior to themselves. By such methods it was he raised himself above his betters in power and riches; and, by I know not what prodigy, was seen strutting about in the colours of the rainbow, and strung with the badges of all the virtues he discouraged. True, fir, says *Lactifer*; and if I had not for some illustrious families all the respect which is due to them; I could name you several persons whose ancestors

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tors were not ashamed to stoop to court his alliance; nay what would the incredulous of our age say, if we should tell them, that some men of the highest rank, whose fortune, birth, and dignity intitled them to live like little sovereigns on their own estates, shew'd themselves of so debased a mind as to pay him servil homage for the sake of a cockade or a bit of *Cordon*, disgraced by his wearing it. But let us leave them to themselves.

What would you think of an *English* lady, who, tho' immensely rich, should stoop to be as busy a stock-jobber as any of the meanest pitiful broker in *Exchange-Alley*? Mrs. *Brown* is dead, and therefore out of respect to the deceased I shall forbear mentioning her many little tradings in stocks and tickets, notwithstanding the immensity of her wealth, a practice which made her justly be placed but upon a level with brokers. Do not be offended, sir, at the expression, it is not I, but the public which speaks. The too great familiarity of the greatest part of stock-jobbers, and brokers would in any other case have shock'd the pride of Mrs. *Brown* which was always in excess: but the affair of getting money was too prevailing a motive with her to scruple a little familiarity.

I presume, says the Knight, that the example of this lady, neither was nor is follow'd. I should never make an end, says *Lactifer*, if I were to give you a detail of all the persons of quality, who, after her example, were not ashamed of the like meanness. In a word, avarice has done more with the nobility than ever

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ever christianity could do; it has render'd them humble, tractable, and familiar with the lowest in life? It must indeed be own'd that there were and are some too truly great, to be capable of so much meanness.

But was it not carrying meanness to a much greater excess, for men of rank to pay their court to an upstart like the minion we were talking of, says the Knight? It is very certain, sir, says *Lactifer*, that *Cordon-bleus*, judges, bishops, statesmen, peers, and every condition were often pall-mall waiting in the antichamber of this minion, like footmen, and even with footmen, till it pleased his greatness to honour them with an audience. Tho' for my own part I should rather have chosen to renounce every dignity or advantage I might have hoped for, than to do any thing unworthy my birth and character. For if those gentlemen who thus demean'd themselves were not stock-jobbers nor brokers, it may at least be said, that their avarice and mean turn of thinking, put them on a level with such. This *Seigneur* fear'd to lose his employ, that bishop put in for a translation, and the judge sued for farther preferment: what do you call this?

I perceive, sir, says the Knight, that this subject put us out of temper; let us return to our principles. Withal my heart, sir, says *Lactifer*, for there is no thinking on what we have been saying without horror. Before we finish this subject, sir, says the Knight, you will give me leave to observe that stock-jobbing and gaming are something related.

Both

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Both have reversed all order, the most mechanic fellows are hence become opulent, and they whom heaven had blessed with considerable fortunes are overwhelm'd with insufferable poverty. Hence the different despairs with which your papers are fill'd, some perishing with hunger, others seeking a speedier release from the keenest of want by a voluntary death; while an insolent footman riots along in a gilded chariot, who perhaps but yesterday open'd the coach-door to his master, to day a beggar. This is not all, sir, avarice has every where seized the hearts of men, and wickedness so prevails that the very appearance of charity is no more to be found. Are you in need of any succour; where is the man who will help you to it? The prophecy of our Saviour seems accomplish'd, that iniquity should prevail and charity become entirely cold. The least sum you can wish to borrow is refused you; or if it is lent you, it is lent at so exorbitant an interest, or with such mortifying circumstances, as destroy the benefit you propose from the loan. Whereas it is positively directed, *lend mutually, expecting nothing.*

It is plain then from this principle that it is unlawful to take any more than legal interest for money lent, because the loan is without alienation. *Lend to one another, expecting nothing for it.* I need not tell you, sir, that this truth is destroy'd by avarice; riches are prefer'd to christianity; and the evil is so universal that we have reason to fear, that the malediction pronounced by *Jeremiah* against the *Jews* is fallen
len

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len upon us, *from the greatest to the least, every one pursues unlawful gain, the prophet is not more exempt than the priest who offers sacrifice.* In fact have you not seen a bishop among you writing in favour of a convention; and a zealous Champion of your city's liberties turn cat in pan? What shall we say after this, fir?

Alas, fir, says *Lactifer*, whenever I think on these circumstances I cannot help believing that the world is drawing to an end. However it must be own'd that there are a few honest men among the many; tho', like wheat, they are so over-sown and stifled with cockle: they are scarce visible; or if they are not totally lost in the croud, it is railery that points them out. So self-confirm'd are men by their own numbers, when they make the mode of the multitude the rule of their actions.

This plainly proves, says the Knight, that there is little faith upon earth, since by that little we are taught that the many are the reprobate part of mankind. True, says *Lactifer*, but we have not time at present to consider profoundly that matter: if you please, we will put an end to our present conversation, by a little tract of history which is just come into my mind, and has a good deal of affinity with what we have been talking of.

I was one day in the country at a relation's, who seem'd to give me a colder reception than he used to do. I could not forbear taking some notice of it to him, but he excused himself with telling me that he had something upon

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his

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his mind which gave him a good deal of uneasiness. May I not know what it is, said I? Uneasiness is sometimes shaken off in great part, when communicated to friends. I will let you into it, said he, but we must first be by ourselves: for should my poor wife know any thing of the matter, she would die with grief.

He came with me at night to conduct me to my chamber, where he told me that he was one of the most unfortunate men living. Why, what has happen'd to you, said I? I have married my daughter, said he, and thought to do well for her by giving her to Mr.—— but have made her truly wretched; for her husband is a miser who suffers her to want every thing. You surprise me, said I, I always took that gentleman for a very rich man. Yes, said he, the *South-Sea* has made him immensely so, but then it has render'd him equally covetous. He had the misfortune to accumulate a very great fortune, and I had the ill luck to give him my daughter on that account. He is now extremely indigent in the midst of plenty, and my daughter is become the victim of his and my own avarice. Now I am severely punish'd: but cannot you think of any means to afford me relief? What can I do, think you? If I was acquainted with him indeed, I might perhaps, said I, induce him to hear reason. He proposed to me the bringing us together the next day, I consented to it, and promised him to do all for his service which

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which should be judg'd proper; and then we parted.

We set out for his house the next morning, but how was I surpris'd, at our journey's end, when we were received by a man who had nothing more of one than the bare shape. I knew not whether the figure I saw was the phantom of *Samuel* or *Lazarus*; imagin a man in a linsy doublet, strait as the shroud of a corpse, with cheeks as hollow as those of a hermit in the eastern deserts, a sulky, scared, and meagre countenance, and eyes bleering, hollow, and starting blood. I would have defied the man to look kindly at me, and indeed he did not, I know not rather whether he did not take me for some harbinger of thieves, come to pry after what was in his house worth stealing, in order to inform the rest of my gang.

I was not mistaken in my man, for, scarce were we well within doors, but he took his father-in-law aside to ask him, who I was; for, said he, in the wretched times we live in, it is necessary to mistrust all the world; and how do I know but the genteel garb he is in may be a borrow'd one, the better to deceive me? Guess, sir, if my relation could forbear laughing. However he put him out of his fears, to put me in a better capacity of playing upon him, which I could not possibly have done, if he had continued to take me for a spy.

I was afterwards introduced to the lady his wife, who like a discreet woman dissembled

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before her father the dissatisfaction which inwardly prey'd upon her; but he perceived it but too plainly, to his own torture of mind. The more she struggled to conceal her sufferings, the sharper sting she gave to those of her father: but at length forced by his sollicitations to make an unreserved acknowledgment of all, she earnestly besought her father not to give himself any farther thought, her evils being remediless.

Our miser scarce was any company to us; his disturbance allow'd him no rest, and he kept his eyes constantly fix'd on us, to observe whether or no we turn'd our looks towards that part where his treasure was hidden. To draw him from the uneasiness he seem'd to be in, I told him I knew a person, who had money to pledge; and that I wanted a person of credit and safety to recommend to him. Is it a large sum, said he, with a secret joy? Yes, sir, said I. But at what interest, says the miser? At a moderate, very moderate rate, I reply'd, three and a half *per cent.* Three *per cent.* says he, in an affected surprize, 'tis too much, sir; I know a man who would do your business; but I know he would not give so much. Why, sir, said I to him again, it is a great deal less than legal interest: But as yours is land security, and yourself a gentleman of integrity, I know the party would prefer your three and a half, to five from most other people. Oh, oh, said he, you young gentlemen understand better how to handle a foyl, than manage your estates. Look you, sir, if you think well of it, I will get the
business

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business done for your friend, if he likes three *per cent.* I shall see him shortly, answer'd I, and will tell him what you say.

As he often went out of the room from us, he gave me the opportunity of asking his lady if she knew where he hid his money. No, said she, but I have observed, that he very frequently goes into the garden; and that he stays there longer of nights than of days. I resolved therefore to follow him softly, and learn from himself what he conceal'd with so much caution, and I took care to remain unperceived.

The night was as favourable to my design as I could wish. The sky was clear and serene, the stars shone in all their lustre, and the moon spread a cheerful brightness over the whole hemisphere, so that I was enabled to follow him with ease, and to remain unseen behind the verdant hedges which hem'd the walks.

I saw him, in fact, very plainly; but saw him in an extreme disquiet, turning his head this way and that, doubtless to see if any one was near to espy him. At length he stoop'd to remove some stones at the mouth of a deep hole, which inclosed his treasure. He mutter'd something to himself, which I was curious to hear, and therefore I approach'd a little nearer to him, while he was busied in weighing a bag he had in his hand. This bag, methinks, says he, does not weigh so heavy as it used to do, I wish somebody is not acquainted with this place, and designs to ruin me. It cannot surely be the gentleman my cousin has brought here: no, he rather wishes me good than harm, for

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he has made me a good proposal. Well, if I could but bring the affair to bear, and get that large sum he speaks of, at three *per cent*. I would buy a pretty estate with it, which should cost little or nothing in comparison of it's worth. But let us see these other bags: one, two, three, four, ——— God be thank'd they are all here; all I doubt of is from the weight, they do not seem heavy; no, heavy enough, that they are not; but I must even have patience, and wait 'till this father-in-law of mine be gone from hence, before I look into the matter, for in short there is no trusting him any more than any one else.

I confess to you, sir, says *Lactifer*, this soliloquy moved me to real pity; and I could never have believed that avarice could have carried a miser to such a length, if I had not been witness to it. I wonder'd no longer that the covetous wretch should be so meagre. When I saw him prepare to bury his hoard again, I thought it time to retire, that I might be within before him. I went into my relation's chamber, who waited for me with impatience, and I was still busy in telling him what I had seen and heard, when the miser went into his room. It join'd to that, in which we then were, conversing upon the subject of his avarice. He heard us talking, and there needed no more to add to his disquiet. He came to us, and saluting us, what, said he, are you not in bed yet?

No, sir, said I, the weather is exceedingly pleasant, and invites us to divert ourselves with

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a little chat at the window. We are observing the situation of your garden and park, which appear very beautiful, and if the gates were unlock'd we would take a walk there.

Have a care of that, says he, gentlemen, the nightly dews in these parts are considerable, and not a little dangerous; you had much better stay within, and go to bed. But how comes it, sir, says his father-in-law to him, that you yourself are not in bed? Oh, sir, answer'd he, you must know what care and labour attend a country life; there is no end of it: and without a little, nay a good deal of watching and caution, there would be scarce any means of subsisting in these unhappy times.

I don't know, said I, whether your vigilance can signify any thing or not; for but just now I fancy'd I saw somebody strolling along the park, who seem'd to mutter something to himself. He changed colour in an instant, and fancy'd himself undone. Is it long, sir, said he in a fright, since you saw that man? Perhaps, said I, he is there still. At hearing this, he left us in a great hurry, and went into the park, fearing lest any one had discover'd his hoard, and rob'd him of it. What do you think, sir, said I to my relation, of this surprising disquiet? I should laugh, sir, said he, if my poor child was not the victim of it; but a man of this turn would well deserve to have a trick play'd him. Let me alone, said I; I have a trick ready for him, which is not of the common sort. We left one another then, and abandon'd the miser to his own care.

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The next morning I got on horseback to go to a neighbouring borough, where I met with all the matters I wanted to execute my project. You have doubtless, sir, heard of that chymical preparation call'd *Phosphorus*, which penetrates thro' walls, and represents, with a kind of burning light, whatever one has a mind they should, on the other side. I prepared one in the morning, and afterwards apply'd it to the wall, on that part which answer'd to the place where his bed stood. I knew the thickness of the wall, and therefore disposed it so as to make the composition have it's effect at the time of his going to bed. I succeeded to my wish; for he was scarce in bed, when he started up in a fright, and went to his father-in-law's chamber to acquaint him with the strange apparition he had seen in his bed.

Pooh, says the father-in-law, you dream. No, no, says he in a faltering tone, I do not dream; and I verily believe that this apparition came to warn me from heaven, that there is some robber about the house. What have you to be afraid of, says the father-in-law? You have told me a hundred times that stock-jobbing has ruin'd you, and that you have scarce wherewith to subsist. That is true, said he, but I must tell you that I have a hundred or two of pounds, which I saved out of the fire; for you know, sir, that it is always wise to keep a cloak against rainy weather. Now I am dreadfully afraid of being rob'd of this.

Well

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Well then, says my cousin, I am your man. This said, he puts on his night-gown, and follows him. Coming into his chamber, he saw there on the wall a hand holding towards the bed a purse all o' fire; see, says the miser, whether I dream or not. What can this figure mean? I cannot say, answers my cousin; but if you will take my advice, we will go and wake *Lactifer*, who has more learning than I have, and who, perhaps, may decypher it. But are you sure of him, says the miser, for I need not tell you what a young beau is, and an officer too; he looks to me to be an honest man, but looks may deceive. You are in the right, says my cousin; but *Lactifer*, who is here, is a man of the strictest honour, I will be answerable for him, you will run no hazard. Well, I rely on you, says the miser, you know that my interest and your daughter's are the same; let us go and wake him.

They came to my chamber, and I got up, and follow'd them back to the same place. I affected to be very much surprized at what he shew'd me, tho' I was no stranger to it. I am told, sir, says he to me, that you can unfold the meaning of this. He had not done speaking, when somebody fired a pistol not far off the garden. He waited no longer for an explanation, but believed immediately that a real hand was carrying away his hoard, which the magic hand pointed out. Ah, sir, says he, I am undone, I told you before that this hand on the wall was sent me as a warning; I am rob'd, I am rob'd, I am undone! What do you mean,

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says the father-in-law? Mean, says the miser? Why have you not heard the pistol fired off? They must be thieves who let it off. I do not believe it, says my cousin; nevertheless it is easy to see that. Yes, says the son-in-law; but do you consider that if they were to wound me it would cost me money to be cured again? Perhaps they may not have taken all. But, sir, said I, how would you have any body rob you, you hear no one stir in the house, and they cannot rob you of much in the park or garden? You do not know my reasons, said he, I have but too much room to be in fear. My cousin and I said what we could to appease him, but all was in vain; so we both left him to retire to bed.

When we were in our rooms we heard him treading softly towards the door of his servant, the only footman he had, of whom even he complain'd, as being very expensive to maintain. From thence he stole softly to the chamber-door of the maid, but hearing them both slumbering he return'd to his chamber to sigh after his hoard which he imagin'd was gone.

The violent state in which I saw this poor gentleman increased the compassion I had conceived for him, and made me resolve to neglect nothing to rid him of the frenzy with which avarice possess'd him. To succeed in it, I watch'd my opportunity so well, that of twenty bags of gold which were in the pit or hole, I have already mention'd, I took ten away. This would have been enough to give him his death, if I had not acted such a part as alleviated

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ted his chagrin a little. I went and paid a visit to the vicar of the parish, to whom I communicated my design. I intreated him to come to the gentleman's seat, to exaggerate to him the poverty of the parish, and the necessities of the poor, and to finish his harangue with a pathetic peroration, signifying how much the parish stood in need of the assistance of this gentleman's purse. The vicar promised to do it, and accordingly came the very evening to pay him a visit.

Our miser, whom we left to his disquiet, had already visited his treasure, and I need not tell you, that he had not great room to be pleased. The vicar's harangue could make no great impression on him, and I verily believe, might he have done it, he would have kick'd him out of doors. However, I gave the vicar a guinea before his face, to pique him with a point of honour. What piece has he given you there, says the miser to the vicar? A guinea, sir, answer'd he. A guinea, says the miser, a guinea! There's the extravagance of our young men of these days, who ruin their father's families by their lavish follies and ill-timed liberalities: sir, sir, says he to me, if you had been my son, I would have taught you better things.

My cousin, who fear'd I might take offence, took up his son-in-law with some warmth. What can you mean, sir, says he; since when has it been a crime to give alms? I do not pretend to say that, says the miser; but I think it very ridiculous to give a guinea, where a half-penny might suffice. But, sir, have you not heard the

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doctor tell us, says my cousin, that the necessities of the parish are great and urgent. What then would you have him do with a half-penny towards it? I am so well convinced that it could be of no use to him, that I cannot think even a guinea a sufficient contribution; and to give you something, sir, says he to the vicar, that may be worth your acceptance, I beg you would farther accept these two guineas from me. What, two guineas more! says the miser! Oh monstrous extravagance! Ah, what a happiness was it for your daughter that I married her; else at your death she must have wanted bread.

There is your mistake, sir, says the father-in-law; nothing multiplies wealth like alms, because GOD prospers all such as cherish CHRIST in the person of the poor. What is that, what do you say there of multiplication? I say, son, that alms is a powerful means of multiplying wealth, and many persons have been known to begin the world with very little, to give much, and to become very rich. Could I, says the miser muttering to himself, could I but re-gain my stolen bags, I would venture to give a couple of guineas for once. What do you say, sir, says my cousin? The gentleman says, answer'd I, that he would readily give two guineas, if he could be sure of recovering his loss by that means. Without doubt he may, replies the vicar, recover either that money or other in it's stead; alms are always recompensed, and ——

But

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But doctor, says the miser taking him up shortly, will you answer for it? Look you, here are two guineas; do you put two more in my father's hands, and if my lost bags are not restored, your two guineas shall be mine, I'll certainly take them; you see I give you fair warning. Sir, says the vicar, would you take the poor's money? For, you know, these three guineas, which the gentlemen gave me, are not for myself but the poor. They are not the worse for that, says the miser, they have their full weight, I dare say. Well, says the vicar, I love to stand to my word, I will put down these two guineas, which I will take care to make up again to the poor to-morrow, out of my own. We shall see what to-morrow may produce.

Our miser could have wish'd that the remaining ten bags had been safe in his house, but they were too big for himself to bring in without help, and he had not the courage to trust any one to assist him, so that he was obliged to run the risk of leaving them longer in the park: and since the firing off of the pistol, he dared not go to visit them so frequently as usual, which gave me an opportunity of re-placing one of the bags which I had taken from the hole.

I re-placed it in fact, but the difficulty was to know whether his two guineas had fructified or not. To know this he should have declared how many bags he had left, and he knew other things than that. The vicar repeated his visit, and ask'd him if he was satisfied with the interest

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rest of his two guineas? I cannot yet tell, says the miser, but I shall know it anon. Why anon? says the father-in-law; you may easily know what you have been rob'd of, by the sum you have still in your possession unstole; all the business then is to know the augmentation of that, and the affair is decided. Pooh, said I, here are difficulties indeed: I have luckily in my pocket, something which will decide it at once. Saying this, I drew out of my pocket a book in *Chinese* characters, and pretended to read, and the miser, curious to see what I was reading, came behind me to read in a book, the letters of which he was an utter stranger too. He took every character for so many diabolical cyphers, and fancy'd I was going to find out by this means all his treasure, and the place where it was. However I did not fully confirm him in his thoughts, but was satisfied with telling him, that there were eleven bags of money somewhere, in a place where he usually put his treasure, but that my book did not tell me any thing more. Stay here a minute, gentlemen, said he, and I shall quickly bring you an answer. He return'd soon after, and own'd that the vicar had won, and that my book told right: but still, continues he, I am a great loser, I have a great deal of money missing, and if the doctor will lay another wager, I will venture another couple of guineas with all my heart. No, says the vicar, I have done it once purely to convince you that alms are always recompenced. You see it plainly to day, and now it is your business to act accordingly.

Well

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Well then, since alms bring a thousand *per cent.* even take these two guineas, doctor, says the miser, towards the necessities of the poor.

You will admire, sir, continues *Lactifer*, at the imbecillity of this gentleman. I see nothing wonderful in it, says the Knight; for every man who is flatter'd in his predominant passion, becomes easily the dupe of such as have a mind to deceive him. Tickle a vain-glorious fool, who thinks himself alone endow'd with more merit than all the rest of mankind put together; if he is rich he will load you with favours: 'tis so too with the miser, shew him a means by which he may gain an immoderate profit, possibility and lawfulness are what he never once thinks on: gain is all he has in view, that alone he pursues, and that only has power to move him. Besides, sir, a crime so enormous in itself cannot but make a man stupid when he is possess'd by it. What you say, sir, will appear more fully at the end of this story, says *Lactifer*.

For the second trick I intended to put upon our miser, I prepared a little figure which represented a man carrying a large sack full of gold, and emptying it on the floor. The miser was no sooner in his room in the evening, than I apply'd it, and the figure by means of a convex glass, assumed the natural size. At the same time I jingled some pieces of money I had in my pocket. He believed the illusion a reality, and went to take up what he thought he had seen fall in his chamber, as soon as ever I had made the figure disappear; but was extremely surpriz'd

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surprized to find nothing on the ground.

The next day he fail'd not to go to his hoard to see what fruit the two guineas yielded, which he had given the vicar for the poor; but he found no more than the eleven bags he left there the day before. Guess, sir, how much he regretted his two guineas.

He was in my chamber with his father-in-law, when word was brought him that the doctor was without. Go tell the parson, says he to the footman, that I have no more guineas for him, and that I'll never trust him again while I live. Do you consider what you say, says my cousin; surely you cannot at your age be ignorant, that a divine does you always a great deal of honour, whenever he pleases to come under your roof? That is mighty well, sir, said he, but I desire none of his honours, if I am to be ruin'd by his visits. What is it you would mean, says my cousin, again. I mean, replies the miser, that the vicar promised I should have my bags again, on condition of giving two guineas *per* bag; and I think that is giving a pretty large interest: and yet the two guineas I gave him yesterday were of no advantage to me, and I found no more than the eleven bags which I had yesterday. Desire the doctor to walk up, says the father-in-law to the footman.

Well, parson, says the miser, are not you a pretty fellow of a prophet? I had not lost enough by being rob'd before, but you must come and rob me of other two guineas. I don't understand you, sir, says the vicar. Have you not found any of your lost bags then? No, says

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says the miser, and you owe me two guineas; which if you don't pay me directly I shall expect interest.

Sir, says the vicar, with what view did you give me the two guineas? A pretty question, said he! It was, I presume, to recover at least two more of the bags I have lost. Oh, says the doctor, I cease to wonder that you have recover'd nothing. When we give alms, sir, charity must be the motive; and if you have no other motive than avarice, how can you expect God to bless a work corrupted by the intention which produces it. Parson, says he, every one to his trade; do you mind your preaching, and leave me to manage my own affairs as I think proper.

It appears to me, says the father-in-law, that what the doctor says to you does not deserve the treatment you give him; and no man in his senses can dissent from the truth of what he says. But I see plainly, sir, you have something more than ordinary on your spirits; the doctor wishes you better than you think he does; tell him then naturally the cause of your uneasiness. It is greater, says the miser; than you could imagine it. I saw last night a man of no disagreeable figure throw a heap of gold on my chamber floor. I cannot say how he came in to my room, or which way he went out, for I always take particular care to lock myself in, in the night; but I was very much frightened to see him; yet the hopes of benefiting by his liberality gave me a little courage. I thought it might be a restitution of what they stole from me,
and

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and who in my case would not have thought so too? But not at all; I stoop'd, and felt nothing but an old flipper, which I suppose I might let fall unluckily, for there is not a man living more unlucky than myself. I took that and lock'd it up, and that was all I could find. In the morning I got up in hopes of seeing my bags multiplied, I told them over and over again, look'd in every corner, but it was to little purpose to look, I found but eleven. Nevertheless my two guineas are gone, thanks to that oracle of mischief the vicar. If this gentleman, pointing to me, would look into his conjuring-book, he might perhaps give me some comforting news.

Yes, sir, said I, with all my heart, nay I have already look'd there. Ah, the good gentleman, says our miser, how much he has my interest at heart! Well, sir, and pray what might you see there? I saw that you should be the happiest man in the world, said I, and —— What is that, sir, says he, interrupting me? I say you are to make a considerable fortune; and —— Ah, the worthy gentleman, says the miser, I have a very great obligation to my father-in-law for the favour of bringing you hither: And so, sir, you say that —— That you are to be happy, said I, and that all you have lost will be again restored to you. But there is a condition without which you must hope for nothing of it. Tell it me quickly, what is it? To recover my money, there is nothing I would refuse, tho' it were to go barefooted to *York*.

No

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No, the condition, said I, is not of so difficult a nature. Remember what the doctor said to you even now: Give alms for charity, and let avarice have no share in the motive; because GOD hears and rewards only charity. I understand you, sir, said he, you talk better than the parson; but when I have recover'd my bags, must I still be under the obligation of giving alms? What a strange stupidity, says the Knight! But such is the dreadful state to which this kind of idolatry brings mankind; such is the state of all who have excluded the HOLY GHOST from their hearts by some tyrannically predominant passion. But I interrupt your story.

Every one, says *Lactifer*, used all possible endeavours to make him comprehend the necessity of charity, at all times, and of doing it more or less abundantly in proportion to the wants of the poor, but he had no ears for such morals. I could not then help reflecting on the young man in the gospel, who, as he says of himself, had fulfill'd the whole law; but when our LORD talk'd to him of relinquishing all to follow him, *he went away sad, and appear'd no more afterwards*. These are the effects of avarice. I was not however discouraged, and before I would give our miser up, I was resolved to use a last effort, to cure by the strength of fancy, a man who was too weak to be susceptible of reason.

I drew, in his absence, on the inside of his bed, with a luminous *Phosphorus*, several hideous figures, holding in their hands the nine bags
which

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which he now gave intirely for lost. The stratagem succeeded very well with regard to the appearances, and our miser, as soon as his candle was extinct, perceiving a number of frightful spectres, call'd lustily out for assistance. The motion which his fears gave him, shook the curtains, by which accident the ghosts seem'd to throw at his head the bags which they held in their hands. This redoubled his panic, and made him call out a second time for help.

We went to his door, his father-in-law and I, but it was lock'd, and he had not at first the courage to rise and let us in. However he at length pluck'd up his spirits, open'd us the door, and led us to his bed-side; and perhaps was more frightened than ever, when the spectres disappear'd at the approach of the candle. What can this be, said he, in an astonishment; I but just now saw the most terrifying of sights, and now all is vanish'd. What then did you see, sir, said I? I saw, answers he, all the devils in hell, I think, who held in their hands just such bags as those I have lost. They seem'd to throw them at my head, and look'd, as I thought, with very stern and threatening countenances at me. What can this mean, sir, and what is the reason I do not see them any more? Go to bed, said I, disquiet has set your blood in motion, and it is nothing but an excess of warmth which makes you fancy to have seen these figures. He went to bed, and kept his eyes shut, as I advis'd him, which was the only means to hinder his seeing them any more.

While

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While he was asleep I carried back the bags to the place whence I took them, and then return'd to bed. Our miser got up very early in the morning, and the first thing he did was to go and visit his hoard, where his stay was shorter than usual. I know not whether it was astonishment or joy which made him return so soon; but he came running to my chamber so hastily, that I had scarce time to get into bed again from watching him, before he came to my bed-side, when I feign'd to be asleep. Sir, says he to me, I beg pardon for waking you, but the situation of mind I am in requires your assistance. What I saw in bed last night was but too true, and the bags which the devils seem'd to throw at my head, I found, together with the other eleven. I wish you joy of it, said I, but the manner of your recovering this loss infinitely surprises me. It seems by the threats of those demons that this money is return'd you as a divine punishment. Take care, sir, however little you attach yourself to riches, you have nothing to expect from God: you might perhaps increase the wealth you have, but it would be only to punish you the more severely, that God would load you with that wealth. What makes you talk thus to me, said he; so far from being rich, I have scarce enough to subsist on. When I heard these words, I perceived plainly that all hopes were vain, and that nothing less than a miracle from heaven could convert a miser. In fact, the next day, when his panic was gone, he entertain'd us with nothing but the joy he had in the thoughts
of

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of having recover'd the money he thought to have lost, and thus we left him.

When *Lactifer* had ended his story, the Knight intreated him to sup with him, which he acquiesced to, and the adventure they were both witnesses to, made the subject of their next interview.

End of the sixth conversation.



CONVER.

CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

Seventh CONVERSATION.

MOST people are apt to overlook what in reality ought to make the most sensible impression on their minds: accustom'd to what commonly passes among the herd of mankind, they acquire an indolent habit of considering things but superficially; and for want of diving into the source of human actions, all the ideas they form from them are confused, and therefore useless. The same cannot be said of a philosopher, nothing escapes him, because he takes the rule of his own conduct from what he observes in others. Such were the dispositions of our two gentlemen, and therefore nothing escaped their observation of what happen'd at supper the preceding evening.

Well,

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Well, sir, says the Knight, what are your thoughts of the Countess of * * *. I think her a fool, says *Lactifer*, for all her nobility: She had nothing else to entertain us with; and but for the lucky necessity of parting, I believe she would still have been tormenting us with the same subject. What an ambitious pitiful prater it is! If you knew this country as well as I do, says the Knight, you would not wonder so much at her ladyship's talk. The place is full of Counts and Princes; titles bought at a very low rate, but titles too of as low a value. Many a one is complimented here with Your Highness, who is scarce three generations off a counter. Such is the vanity men feed upon! Fools and knaves flatter them with the empty jingle, and the wise laugh at them for it. But their rallery is ill bestow'd, for this upstart gentry are insensible to it.

Do you believe then, says *Lactifer*, that if they were really sensible of the ridicule, it would have any good influence over their conduct? I cannot pretend to say that, says the Knight, because I know ambition to be a very outrageous passion where it is predominant. It is the harder to be cured as it is born with us, and is the source whence the generality of men mistake that for grandeur of soul, which in reality is mere weakness.

How, sir, says *Lactifer*, can this passion be born with us, when at our birth we have nothing in us but what God has been pleased to stamp there? It is very true, says the Knight; and so true, that if we had been so happy to preserve

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preserve ourselves in our first innocence, we should still feel that passion within us, but then indeed it would have a quite other object. God stamp'd it on our hearts; I say more, He even gives us the very seeds of ambition in the Holy Scriptures. Sometimes he shews men how much he has done for them, and thence would have them comprehend their own dignity. At other times he reminds them of being form'd to his likeness. Here he submits all other creatures to their command, and there he tells them that they are gods. God then will have men be ambitious; that is, he will have them aspire even to the divinity itself, in seeking every means to become united with him in the most intimate manner; to have no other will than his, to reign wholly with him, in a word, to be attach'd to him like members to their head. Such is the ambition worthy a man; and such the ambition God stamp'd in us from the instant of our creation.

But our innocence was not of long standing, corruption took place of it, and it is that which works this change of object, and this deviation from truth. God, who would have such elevated considerations the objects of our ambition, teaches us that nothing less than eternity is the premium of it; the sole means to obtain which is profound humility; but to this corruption is an utter stranger. Whence it is written, *Let him among you, who would be the greatest, be least.* This proves, that true greatness is not of this world; and that the means to purchase it are directly opposite to earthly greatness. Thus
L
far,

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far, fir, adds the Knight, you see here on one hand ambition engraven on our hearts by the hand of God himself, and in this circumstance it is a great virtue; on the other hand, you see corruption, which is capable only of metamorphosing into vice the very greatest virtue.

Alas, says *Lactifer*, there is but too much truth in what you say: and I look upon your ambitious honour-hunters in the same light as I do on your ancient philosophers, straying in quest of happiness. Both alike are out, because both alike seek what they want there only where it is not to be found. In reality what is there in the empty title of quality, which might not as well have light on any other person than it now does? What in an employ received from a sovereign, who is pleased to honour us frequently more out of whim than regard to merit, and who would have bestow'd the same as freely on any other, who had appear'd before him vested with the same circumstances? Or finally what in an honourable charge which money has purchased, in prejudice perhaps of some who might have deserved it better? Does fortune then add any thing to merit, and might not any one who had bid above us had it preferably to us?

You are right, fir, says the Knight, and your digression is chiefly owing to the justness of your reasoning. To come at the source of human actions, it is necessary sometimes to lay aside the logician for a while, the better to enter into the motives which gave them being. It is

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is very true that in the pretty detail you have given there is nothing capable of truly gratifying ambition; but do you imagin, sir, that there is always reality where corruption presides? Let us stick close to our principle, and yet reason with the herd of mankind, perhaps we may be able to unfold the motives which set them in action.

Sir, says *Lactifer*, I cannot help looking upon all which the countess said last night, as excessively extravagant. Can you think her then attach'd to any principles, who could run on at such a deplorable rate? I know, says the Knight, her principles are not eternal ones, and therefore they must be false principles: but still they are principles, that is, they are the causes of the conceptions of her mind and motions of her heart, and the motives of her acting and talking as she does rather than in any other manner. Why did her ladyship talk to us so long and so loudly of her quality, but because she is falsely persuaded that nobility adds something real to her being, which absolutely distinguishes her from the rest of mankind? Whereas on the contrary were she apprised that it is Worth which honours nobility, her having so little merit would have made her perhaps less fond of talking. It is thus that men are often unseasonably puff'd up with a title, which they disgrace for want of merit proportion'd to it. What does it avail the countess to be descended from the duke of ***** if her sentiments and actions disgrace the blood she boasts from him? A man who sets up for nobility ought

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to be more noble by greatness of soul than he is even by that of birth; whereas we see nothing but littleness almost every where.

Remark but *Lubo*, that disgrace to nobility, who, Lord as he is, places all his brutal glory in the fifty bravery of porters and carmen: He thinks himself greater and more powerful than others, because forsooth he has more domestics; and fancies them all so many members added to his own, capable of adding some magnitude to his real littleness. But alas what is he? The veryest trifle is capable of throwing him into a rage, an unlucky hit at tennis is enough to unman him, and what others can regard with contempt he cannot behold without being hurried into frenzy, impiety, and blasphemy against his maker. And thus while false ambition urges him to seek glory and universal esteem by the most despicable means, what wonder is it to see him sovereignly despised by the lowest about him? Where then is this greatness, this nobility; or what is this boasted basis of ambition? 'Tis meer fancy and chimera all, and vanishes before the light of scrutiny.

Chimera, or what you please, sir, says *Lactifer*, it is still true that the ambitious are so numerous that there is scarce a man who is not of the number. Some covet power, others splendor, a third sort dignity. Even persons in low life have their ambition, tho' confined to a narrow sphere: and there is no profession exempt from it. All soldiers would be captains, and every lawyer would be chancellor. There is
no

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no physician but wishes for his chariot, and no clergyman but courts his scarf: they who cannot hope to be bishops would at least be doctors. The citizen never rests till he is mayor, alderman, or at least of the common council. All tradesmen are ambitious to be gentlemen, and all gentlemen want to be peers.

Now when once a man is ambitious of a title, his ambition makes him look upon titles as the only honours worth possessing. Wherefore every means, however dishonourable in itself, which tends to the acquisition of what he aims at, appears lawful to him. Hence he rather chuses to forfeit the solid honour, which the reputation of an honest man is capable of giving him, than not to court, with the most abject prostitution of virtue, an empty sound, which he vainly conceits will add something to his being and raise him above the rest of mankind. Whereas in reality it only serves to diminish him in the eyes of all thinking men, by placing his real littleness of soul in a conspicuous light, which before might have pass'd in the croud unobserved.

While titles were confer'd only to point out singular merit, they were just objects of virtuous ambition. To wish to be a Lord, and to deserve to be one, were the same thing; because no one could attain to that dignity but by eminent bravery, honour, loyalty and patriotism. So that the desire of, or fondness for titles was nothing other than the noble ambition of excelling in all that is greatly good. But in these days when titles are too often the

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prostitute premiums of baseness, or at best but the extravagant purchase of profuse folly, they are rather a disgrace than an honour to the persons they distinguish.

It is not title, but virtue, which ennobles. And an ancient family, illustrious through many generations for laudable actions, may be sunk into plebeian meanness by the first Lord of the name. While another of less ancient date shall protract it's nobility and honour unstain'd to numberless ages, without a title. A plain proof that real honour receives no addition from distinguishing sounds, nor any diminution from the want of them. An industrious tradesman behind a counter may be a greater ornament to his illustrious predecessors than a lordly sycophant under a *George*. And while the latter is debasing his blood in the sale of his country, the former may raise his family's glory by promoting the public good. Of so little signification is title in itself. And yet how many men, even virtuous men, of the best families, have I seen weak enough to be uneasy for want of a title, tho' convinced that it could add nothing real to their true greatness! And how many others have I known, who could scarce reckon three generations from the first baronet of their race, so very vain of this empty glory as to look down on all the untitled world with a contempt little different from that with which we eye the irrational part of the creation. You shall see some tradesmen assume an air of grandeur, which would scarce set well under a coronet, because forsooth their great grand-fathers were

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were Sr. *Johns*. On the other hand you shall see a gentleman blush to own a tradesman for his relation, notwithstanding that the first of his family must have been a tradesman, and the industry of another is tending perhaps to re-establish the decaying greatness of it, which he and some of his gentlemen predecessors wanted spirit to support.

But what is most extraordinary in this kind of frenzy, is to see a man, who is himself actually a tradesman, value himself above all other tradesmen, for being perhaps related to some baronet, tho' but afar off. When upon examination we may chance to discover, that he is, at best, but collaterally descended from the same stock, and that the head of this boasted family is but the third or fourth in possession of a title, as much owing perhaps to the prince's excess of benevolence as to any very eminent degree of merit in the subject.

I myself knew a man of this stamp: who, after having improved his substance in trade sufficiently to make his only daughter a handsome fortune, had still such a contemptuous notion of traffic, and remain'd so full of his imaginary gentility, that he chose rather to sacrifice her to be a second to a rival hound or a favorite hunter, in the embraces of a country squire, than to marry her to a virtuous discreet and thriving tradesman tho' qualified and likely (even by his own acknowledgement) to make her compleatly happy, the first in his affections, and one day an absolute gentlewoman. So true is it that ambition rules more or less the

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hearts of men of every degree, as well men of some sense and merit as those who entirely want both.

I own it, says the Knight, the number of the ambitious is exceeding great, because there are few men who reason at all, and of those few that do the major part are led away by the imaginations which their senses suggest, and which suit best with the corruption they flow from. A magnificent equipage strikes the senses and agreeably flatters them, corruption makes us consider the owner of it as a person raised above the common sphere of men: we see the respect which is paid him, and falsely conclude from it that this seeming grandeur has something real in it. Needs there any thing more to set us on using our utmost efforts to reach it, when we have the same seeds in our hearts which gave birth to the invention of that magnificence? It is very true that all this cannot give the true grandeur and nobility which ought to form the characteristic of men of quality, but we try at least to approach as near as possible to them, by mimicking those external ornaments which their station often obliges even the truly great to make use of. Besides we are apt to flatter ourselves, that on certain occasions people may mistake us for something more than we really are, especially in great towns where our acquaintance are few in comparison of the many who do not know us. And what is all this but mere chimerical notions?

This puts me in mind, says *Lactifer*, of what I have often remark'd at *London*: how many tradesmens

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tradesmens wives and daughters frequent the public places in dresses out-shining all the magnificence of the best of quality there. They are delighted to hear people enquire who they are; they hope, while their names are unknown, their dress will attract them respect, and vainly flatter themselves that the appearance they make gives them both birth and merit.

To see *Grandilla* strutting along, one would be apt to imagin her some aerial Goddess, who only vouchsafed to be visible to us mortal creatures, to shew us how much she despises us. She fancies herself defiled by the touch of every thing which is not equal to her in rank. They, whom capricious fortune, to ridicule her, has placed her upon a level with, are the only company she delights in; those above her she hates for being so; and such as are inferior to her in station, however above her in birth, are the never failing objects of her contempt. Whoever has any dependence on her is sure to feel the weight of it. The least affability to her servants she thinks a most degrading crime; and to require her to courtesy to a tradesman who attends her for her custom, would be sufficient to throw her into convulsions. She would blush to be civil to her very equals, if they chance to offend her arrogance; nay, upon such occasions, she can, with inimitable ease, receive a bow or a courtesy, stare the person she knows in the face, and draw her chin some inches back without making the least return; and if her neck is not dislocated in the toss of her head, it is owing to the facility she has acquired by the habit

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of doing it. I perceive, fir, adds *Lactifer*, you imagin me to be talking of some haughty duchess, intoxicated with the greatness of her birth, and the lustre of her pedigree. But *Grandilla* was originally but of very low extraction; and would now, perhaps, have sat scoring gills of wine in a tavern-bar, had she not luckily married a young officer, who conceited her handsome, and wanted to lye with her. Her husband is fourth cousin, once removed, to a man of title, and this fifth-rate nobility has so besotted her with pride, by being something too high for her expectation, that she is now grown a burden to herself, a subject of mirth to all above her, a nuisance to her equals, the hatred of her inferiors, and insupportable to all who know her: even her relations glory in the meanness of their birth to expose her; and those very tradesmen, whom interest might induce to overlook her assuming airs, are too much above her to sacrifice a becoming spirit to the profit which her haughtiness would make them earn at too dear a rate: Insomuch that she had the mortification to see herself scornfully turn'd off by two stay-makers in less than a week. Yet this will seem nothing to you, when I tell you that the good-natur'd husband, by whom she holds all this ideal greatness, fares no better than other's; if she honours him at times with a few *Billy's* and *Dearees*, they are but like the apothecary's sugar-plumbs, to make the most nauseous poisons palatable: She has both confidence enough to make a fool of him, and assurance enough to tell him that he is one.

But

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But I wonder as little at this extravagance in the vulgar, as I am greatly astonish'd at it in monarchs, who should inherit, one would imagin, from their very birth a certain greatness of soul above the common. Nevertheless we see the Princes of the East as ridiculously ambitious as these mean people; they make all their greatness consist in the number of their camels, their elephants, their jewels, &c. To speak truth, I see nothing more extravagant than this, tho' they should add to it all the riches of *Peru*. The principle is every where the same, sir, says the Knight, and a corrupt imagination stands in stead of principle to all such as are little accusom'd to reasoning. Do you imagin that royalty makes a man reason better? On the contrary, they are taken up with such a variety of objects which strike their senses, and are beset by such crouds of flatterers, who are perpetually applauding their very foibles, that they are more liable than any others to mistake error for truth.

The prince and the peasant are men alike, both equally imperfect, and both slaves to the same passions, because both are alike victims to their own concupiscense. The prince, like the peasant, thinks himself more or less great, in proportion to the more or less abundant wealth which raises him above, or equals him to, or places him below those of his own sphere; a king powerful in riches fancies himself greater than another monarch whose treasures are less than his; so a shepherd whose flock is so numerous as to afford him a ribband to his flagelet,

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thinks himself above his brother shepherd who cannot reach that little ornament.

What you say, sir, is matter of fact, says *Lactifer*, but I can find nothing reasonable in it: what can make that reasonable creature, man, act so unlike himself? I could ask you another question, sir, says the Knight; what can make a man at play so fond of winning, even when he plays only for amusement? It is because he fancies himself a favorite of fortune, thinks he deserves to be happy, and that his desert makes him more perfect than others. The man who acts thus, seldom gives attention to all this; but the principle is in him, and he acts in consequence of it, without knowing he does; because his natural ambition, which is corrupted, is ever acting within him, and a long habitude hinders him from perceiving it. A young fellow sees a General surrounded with a brilliant retinue, he is charm'd with the lustre of his glory, he is resolved to attain to it, and therefore takes up arms. He imagines that the victories of a *Marlborough* or *Eugene* were absolutely their own; he is sure of his own courage and conduct, he tells you, and doubts not but he shall reach to the same pitch of glory with either of them. This idea flatters his ambition, and therefore never hope to cure him of it. It will be in vain to tell him that the success of arms is precarious, and that the whole depends on the God of arms; ambition infatuates him, and he can hear no other voice. We seldom listen willingly, sir, says *Lactifer*, to what contradicts our passions; tell a lady that there is too much affectation in
her

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her dress, and she will never forgive you; because the lust of pleasing is the point of her ambition, and the means, by which she hopes to attain to it, is dress. You have doubtless heard of our two celebrated beauties, the Lady *Fanny* ***, and the Lady *Betty* *****; *Fanny* has a great deal of merit, but she is too sensible of it herself, and her ambition renders her so forbiddingly haughty, that, like a Goddess, she is not to be approach'd but with incense in hand. *Betty* is less lofty, but not less insupportable; because ever tiring you with the greatness of her birth and the muster-roll of illustrious persons of her name.

If ambition, sir, says the Knight, had no consequences more fatal than those you speak of, the inconveniencies of it would not be very great; we might get rid of them by keeping at a distance from such silly creatures; and their defects being personal would be without consequence. But nothing is more melancholy than the fatal precipices down which ambition drags it's inconsiderate followers, nothing more deplorable than the sad evils and bloody catastrophes which the thirst of false glory draws after it. A remarkable proof of it appears in a little tract which I lately read, in some manuscript memoirs I have by me, relating to certain particulars not to be met with in general history. The story is fresh in my mind, and as it is very affecting and not foreign to our present subject, I will relate it to you, if you are disposed to listen to it. *Laetifer* express'd his desire of hearing it, and the Knight began.

Some

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Some time before *Pharamond*, *Orontius*, surnamed *the Good*, reign'd over that part of *Gaul* known by the name of *the Island of France*, and held his court at *Paris*. In his reign liv'd *Sempronio* and *Amanda*, who had two sons and a daughter; the elder was *Sempronio's* favorite; *Amanda's* tenderness was equally divided among all her children. *Sempronio* was ambitious beyond measure, *Amanda* stranger to every ambition but that of doing good. The Father educated his eldest son in all the maxims of false glory; the mother, wise as she was virtuous, endeavour'd to sow in them, from their early youth, the solid seeds of virtue and religion. *Lucio*, the eldest of the three children, though naturally of a good disposition, was corrupted by his father's example and specious reasoning; but *Amanda's* frequent counsels, supported by her own practice, had all the good influence she could desire, over the hearts of *Hilario* her younger son and *Pulcheria* his sister.

The birth and fortune of *Sempronio* intitled him to some notice at court, and his education qualified him to make a figure in the first posts of the kingdom. As his ambition led him to aspire to them, he neglected no means conducive to the end he aim'd at, and the strength of his genius improved every incident into a means. So that he soon rose to a considerable share in the administration of state affairs.

He no sooner made his first step into the ministry than, taking the advantage of that power which his merit and good fortune put into his hands, he labour'd in the promotion of his
children

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children. *Pulcheria* was prefer'd to be a maid of honour to the Queen, and her many excellent qualities soon lifted her to the first place in the royal graces of her sovereign mistress. *Hilario* had a post of very great honour and profit; but the chief study of *Sempronio* was to aggrandise *Lucio*; not so much for that he was the eldest and heir to his estate and honours, as because his similitude of sentiments with those of his father made him the first in his paternal favour. It must be own'd that *Sempronio* loved all his children, and the only reason, perhaps, why he loved *Hilario* and *Pulcheria* less than their elder brother, was, that the contempt they shew'd for pomp and external grandeur seem'd an obstacle to the ambitious views he had for them. He look'd upon worldly riches and power with the splendour attending them to be the only true greatness, and therefore imputed to meanness of spirit, and stupidity, the indifference with which his two younger children view'd every prospect of preferment. But as the greatest men are liable to the greatest mistakes, whenever they suffer a predominant passion to lord it over their understanding, *Sempronio* in this particular was very much deceived in his opinion. Neither *Hilario* nor *Pulcheria* were insensible to the splendour of riches and greatness, but then they were sensible of the dangers attending both. They had learnt from the wise instructions of their incomparable mother, that true glory consists not in the possession of honours but in deserving to possess them, and that the only sure way

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to hold them with any safety is to hold them without attachment. Wherefore they were too busy in rendering themselves worthy of every dignity, to have time to solicit for any: and self-diffidence which is twin-born and ever grows up with real merit, shew'd them to themselves in so dubious a light, that the more they really deserved, the less they aspired to preferments; and the more room they had to hope for, the greater difficulty they had to relish, honours, which *Amanda* had taught them to consider as so many gilded pills in which danger is made inviting by the vehicle it is convey'd in.

Honours, their mother would often say to them, like medicins in the spring, are very innocent things, where the person who receives them is sound enough to digest whatever in them is nutrimental to virtue, and not too weak to separate it from whatever may be detrimental or unsafe. Nothing more proper than power and greatness to add new vigour to a wise and virtuous soul which knows how to improve every advantage into wisdom and goodness. But the labour and care attending on that power and greatness are so repugnant to our natural love of ease, that no one would have courage to venture upon them, but for the sweets they are wrapt in: and even those sweets would be too luscious to invite the nicer few, if the gilded leaf of splendour did not, by striking the senses agreeably, remove from our attention whatever in them is capable of creating a dislike. How much
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are those happy few to be envied, who, alimending their virtuous principles with what is substantial in the honours they receive, have strength of mind enough to throw off the crudities they are apt to occasion! But how much on the contrary are they to be pitied, who, deluded by the shining outside of greatness, covet it more for the sake of the poisonous sweets it is blended with, than for any solid advantage they propose to receive from it! Such sickly mortals, far from receiving any real benefit from the object of their depraved appetites, convert into poison what heaven intended for their benefit. And the honours which God design'd the present recompense of virtue, and the means of increasing merit, they convert into incentives to vice and the means of their own destruction. For tho' their folly is perceptible to every one who will allow himself a moment to reflect; they themselves seldom see it till too late, and when reflection is so much the more afflicting as ruin is inevitable. May not such after-wise persons repeat after *Jonathan* that melancholy complaint, *I have tasted a little honey, and lo I die?*

These and such like noble sentiments this prudent mother would often inculcate to her children, but tho' she had the comfort to find they were not lost on *Hilario* and *Pulcheria*, she had the mortification to see *Lucio* pay no regard to them. However she was too precious in the sight of heaven for God to leave her long on earth; and the religious zeal with which she labour'd to instill piety into her children

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was so grateful to him that he thought her worthy to be waisted to himself, e'er too long a communication with the world could sully her spotless manners, and e'er she could be a distressful witness of the sad consequences of this refractory youth's ambition. Experience shew'd that her life could have only served to augment, in her, griefs, which the divine goodness did not think her deserving of; and to add to the heinous guilt of *Lucio's* disregard to her precepts. The example of his father, join'd to his frequent lectures, and the flattering success which confirm'd his ambitious maxims, prevail'd with the too aspiring son, and weigh'd down all the solidity of *Amanda's* principles. Nothing had force to attract him but glory, and nothing was glory with him but riches and splendor. Power he consider'd not as a means to render himself worthy of, but as an instrument to attain to, that false glory, of which he had form'd to himself such a flattering idea.

An ambitious father like *Sempronio* could not fail being fond of a son, whose sentiments were so perfectly of a piece with his own. He look'd upon *Lucio* as the promising support of the rising greatness of his family, and therefore apply'd all his thoughts to second the towering views of the young man. The youth had extraordinary parts, a fine person, and a genteel address, which join'd to the polite education he had received, made it no difficult matter for *Sempronio*, who was now the first and chief in the administration, to promote him to almost an equal share in it with himself. But this was not enough to satiate the
forward

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forward ambition of *Lucio*. So far from contenting himself with being the next in greatness to his father, and the third in authority in the kingdom; nothing less would serve his turn than having the step of his parent, and being allied to his sovereign, by marrying his royal daughter.

The Princess was extraordinarily beautiful, courteous beyond expression, of an uncommon understanding, and the early education she had received in every branch of useful knowledge finish'd her a wonder of her sex. But all these perfections had not half the sway with *Lucio* which the consideration of royalty had. She was the King's daughter, that was more than enough to determin the daring youth to entertain thoughts of pretending to her, without once reflecting on the distance which sovereignty placed between him and her; accordingly he was more than commonly assiduous in his homage to her. For though he judged, and judged rightly, that the chief means to attain to his ends would be to court her royal father's favour; yet he left nothing untried to insinuate himself into the princely maiden's affections, tho' without any success. Indeed as she mistook his assiduities for effects of his eminent loyalty to her royal parents, she rewarded him frequently with special marks of her gracious favour; which the young courtier, partly confident of himself, and partly flatter'd by his ambitious hopes, interpreted into proofs of her corresponding to his distant addresses. So that the affability of her Royal Highness, which ought to have created in him a more profound

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awe, served only to make him more forward. However he had too much sense to dare fortune too far by any hasty declaration of love to her, before he had secured himself the King's favour, and therefore satisfied himself with redoubling his officiousness to her, And yet, artful as he was, he so over-acted his part, that, whether thro' an effect of strain'd cunning, or of the passion which hurry'd him on, he either could not or would not hinder the young princess from observing something mysterious in his behaviour; though all her surmises were wide of the real cause of it. Sometimes she attributed his extraordinary attentions for her to a desire of distinguishing his attachment to the royal family; sometimes to the levity of youth; and other times to some degree of affectation: but never once imagin'd he had arrogance enough to court her for a wife.

If the princess was yet susceptible of any affection it was all for *Hilario*, whose chearful, easy, modest deportment, manly sense, sublime sentiments, and affable disposition, join'd to the agreeableness of his person, had often charm'd her in the drawing-room; and, had she been skill'd in the secrets of love, she might have discern'd, thro' the distant awe with which he used to accost her, a something which express'd more veneration for her person than for her high dignity. Not that *Hilario* harbour'd the least thought of making any pretensions to one, whom royalty and merit, as well as his own diffidence, seem'd to raise to an inaccessible height above him. He could not, indeed, help pursuing

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pursuing every opportunity of doing homage to the royal maid; a secret irresistible impulse urg'd him to it: But he was not apprised that it was love; neither was the Princess sensible of the true source of her partiality for him: Both attributed their tenderness for each other to the regard which justice and good sense taught them to pay to real worth.

Thus these two innocent lovers went on for some time, enjoying the guiltless pleasure of seeing and mutually delighting in each other without suspecting the cause which gave birth to their delight; and therefore, while they enjoy'd all the sweets of the purest affection, they remain'd still strangers to the anxieties inseparable from the fear of losing the object of their virtuous passion, and to all the turbulent emotions of soul, which are the fruits of an irregular appetite. Their loves, like the waters of the Nile, latent in their rise, spread as they advanced, and frequently overflow'd; but overflow'd only to produce plenty of substantial joys; with this difference still, that they harbour'd nothing of venomous, and were neither rapid nor divided into different streams, but glided on in one gentle, even pace, till they met and center'd in each other.

Hilario's solidity, parts, politeness, and universal learning induced the King to give him the inspection over the education of the young Prince, a youth of a very promising genius, extraordinary docility and courtesy of temper, and enrich'd with all the qualities requisite in a Prince destin'd one day to rule over a happy nation

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nation. He was the delight of his royal parents, the idol of the people, and extremely beloved by, and fond of, the Princess his sister. Their affections were their same, their manner of thinking the same, their expressions the same, and their very persons almost the same. A union so intimate could not but beget in them such a reciprocal tenderness for each other as seem'd to speak but one soul in two bodies; and this intimacy gave frequent opportunities to the young Princess to indulge herself the guiltless pleasure of seeing and conversing with *Hilario* in her brother's apartment more frequently than she could in the drawing-room. Every time she saw him, she discover'd in him some new merit, and felt a new satisfaction in his conversation. She would frequently ask him questions for the sake of his answers. And tho' she was well versed in every useful knowledge, beyond the common capacity of so tender an age (for she was yet but sixteen) she would often plead ignorance for the pure pleasure she took to be instructed by him. But if the manly wisdom of *Hilario* and his modest graceful manner of communicating it charm'd the soul of the Princess; her beauty, heighten'd by sense and softness, kindled in his breast such a lambent flame as consumed before it and converted all into itself, with so much the greater ease as it enter'd unperceived and reign'd unresisted. *Hilario*, now no more disposed to think himself wise, more than ever wish'd to be so, for the sake of making his beloved Princess as perfect as he found her by nature disposed to be. All his daily thoughts were now bent on learning

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learning what seem'd most proper to instruct her in; his nightly studies had the same end in view, and his whole conduct and converse were inspired by an ardent desire of embellishing the mind and enriching the heart of this royal maid with every useful science and the love of every virtue.

One house, one education, and one temper of soul having wrought in his sister *Pulcheria* a similitude of sentiments with his own, *Hilario* justly imagin'd that an intimacy between the Princess and her would greatly contribute to his design, and therefore resolved to neglect nothing to effect it. The many perfections of *Pulcheria* made her the universal delight of the court; her beauty was enliven'd by every winning grace, and the attracting sweetness of her behaviour stole the hearts of all who beheld her. The sprightliness of her wit and sense gave her universal authority over the minds of all she conversed with, and the modesty with which she forbore assuming render'd her authority unenvied. The men pay'd her a kind of adoration, which her own sex could not but own to be her due. In a word, she was the first instance of an ingrossing beauty free from the carpings of jealousy, and the first favourite of royalty unrival'd. Perhaps she was the first who deserved to be so, as she was the first rich enough in merit to repay, with interest, the justice which the world did her in admiring her. For as her merit was genuin, it was unmix'd with pride, and therefore she would often say, that *she was at a loss for nothing so much as to know what*
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the world could see in her to admire at, unless it was her falling so short of the merit of many of her own sex, who enjoy'd not her advantages. It must therefore be an easy matter for her brother Hilario to cement an intimacy between her and a Princess of the same age with her, and who alone could have any pretensions to an equality of merit with her.

In fact, they grew so intimate that they were sensible of no pleasure out of each other's company; and it very seldom happen'd that they were not together, save when *Pulcheria's* attendance on the Queen made it necessary for them to be absent for a while. However those little intervals of absence served but to enhance their mutual joy at meeting again, and communicating to each other the little pains they had felt while asunder, and the little occasions of pleasure they had met with and lost for want of being together to share them.

Their friendship encreasing with their discoveries of merit in one another, the least separation from *Pulcheria* grew so insupportable to the Princess, that, after the Queen's death, whom the kindly fever of fixty eased of the load of life, she intreated the King to grant her this maid of honour for her own lady of the bed-chamber, and obtain'd her request; from which time they became inseparable. They were so very like in their persons, that, but for the princely ornaments of the one, it would have been a difficult matter to discern them apart, and even now the sameness of sentiments, and manner of expressing them, made it impossible

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to distinguish them, tho' together, without looking at both. So that their friendship, visible to all and disapproved by none, soon became proverbial, and when quoted as an example, was universally call'd the *celestial union*, as if nothing less than a supernatural influence of heaven could produce so perfect an intimacy between two such accomplish'd beauties.

Whenever the Princess went to her brother's apartment to partake of the instructions he received from *Hilario*, she took with her her favorite lady of the bed-chamber. And as the Prince admitted to an equal intimacy with him the young Lord his governor, he introduced him to his sister's apartment, and often took him with him, when he himself went thither to enjoy the sweets of her conversation. By this means her royal highness and *Hilario* had daily opportunities of reaping the delight which the sight of each other mutually afforded them; and the Prince had all the leisure requisite to become perfectly acquainted with the perfections of *Pulcheria*. *Pulcheria* on her side had too quick a penetration to remain long a stranger to his royal highness's excellent qualities; and as her own extraordinary perfections naturally led her to admire and esteem merit wherever she found it, it is no wonder that that softness of soul, which polish'd and refined all her perfections, should melt her esteem into love. In fact, love soon asserted his sovereignty over the hearts of lovely *Pulcheria* and the young Prince; and cemented them in as strong a union as he had be-

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fore the souls of the too charming Princess and her dear *Hilario*.

Tho' *Pulcheria* made full as great a progress in love as the Prince, her innate modesty kept her from giving any external marks of it, saving certain little uneasinesses in his absence, and solitudes for his welfare, which inadvertency stole from her. For the spotless innocence of her mind made her too little suspicious of the emotions of her heart, to suffer her to be enough upon her guard against observation. She did not know herself to be in love, and therefore was neither cautious nor afraid lest any one should think her so. The virginal blushes, with which pleasure flush'd her whenever the Prince appear'd, plainly spoke the purpose of her soul, which she herself was too little acquainted with to wish to conceal. And yet his royal highness, unversed as yet in the language of love, was the least capable of reading the soft impression himself had graven on her tender heart; though he was so religiously devoted to her, as to be perpetually on the watch of her looks, to learn thence what inclinations of hers he could have the happiness of gratifying. He could not but perceive the frequent change in her countenance whenever he approach'd her and while he was conversing with her; but what he ought to have interpreted to his favour, respectful fear and that self-dissatisfaction which ever accompany the loves of men of the greatest merit, made him construe to his disadvantage. He saw nothing lovely and estimable but in the more than lovely *Pulcheria*, and therefore, blind to his

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his own high worth, he was blind to the love which that had kindled in her breast. Her blushes he attributed to the uneasiness which the sight of him gave her, and the perplexity his assiduities frequently threw her into, appear'd to him a proof of her dislike; which flung him at length into a seriousness not very wide of melancholly. But lovers seldom see at all, and never right: The rash and foolish can see no fault in their beloved object; and they whom sense and virtue direct to the choice of a really faultless one, are as incapable of seeing any perfection in themselves. This was the case with the Prince; and his blindness had proved fatal to his happiness, if the Princess his sister had not seen better than himself.

The Princess, perhaps, was as dim-sighted, as her brother, in what concern'd herself and *Hilario*. We often see with a clearer light for others than for ourselves. Her royal highness could not help observing a very visible alteration as well in her brother as in *Pulcheria*, and began to perceive a more than ordinary regard in each for the other. Whether what she herself felt within her for *Hilario* inclined her to think so, or the desire she had of seeing two persons so dear to her, dear to each other, made her wish so; she was not a little pleased with the discovery; tho' she kept it to herself, either to have better opportunities of assuring herself, or thro' fear of disturbing a passion she knew to be innocent in itself.

But while the princess herself was thus attentive to what pass'd between her brother and

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Pulcheria, she was not enough upon her guard to prevent his making as important a discovery with regard to her and *Hilario*. He had long been witness to the awful respect with which this young Lord so studiously devoted himself to her service, as well as to the partial goodness and returns of his sister; but had been witness only as a person may be to the signature of a conveyance, without knowing or concerning himself to know the purport or meaning of what he is witness to. But now what pass'd within his own soul afforded him light enough to penetrate into theirs. And he was the more pleased at the discovery as he entertain'd some hopes that by assisting them in their loves, he might induce them to join in softening the heart of his dear fanciedly cruel *Pulcheria*. He resolved therefore to seize the first occasion to sound his sister and *Hilario*, thereby to get rid, if possible, of the languishing distress his fears created in him. For tho' this new prospect of hope served to buoy him up a little from absolutely sinking into despair; yet it was very far from being sufficient to dissipate the thick cloud of sadness, which his mistaken notion of *Pulcheria's* dislike to him had gather'd over his soul.

One day when the Princess and he were alone with each other, he open'd his mind to her, and told her his love and fears, not forgetting the reasons he had to believe her heart was not more at liberty than his. The Princess would have fain persuaded her brother that he was in a mistake with regard to her dispositions; but love had already made him so great a master in
his

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his secrets, that she labour'd in vain; for he brought her to 'own, that his royal highness was better acquainted with her heart than she was herself. You force me, dear brother, said she, to confess that I have a more than ordinary regard for *Hilario*. From the first opportunity I had of discovering the great worth of that young Lord, I conceived a high esteem for him; and every day since, I have had fresh reason to be convinced that my esteem was not misplaced; but I never once suspected till you unfolded my heart to me that that esteem was love. I have often indeed thought that the happy woman, who is destin'd to pass her life in the enjoyment of his conversation, will deserve the envy of royalty; and must, if she is sensible of her blessing, look down upon royalty like mine, when debar'd of such a bliss, with pity and contempt. And since I may freely open my soul to you, I own, I would rather be the meanest of our royal father's subjects to share my fortune with *Hilario*, than receive a crown from any other man, tho' emperor of the whole habitable world. But *Hilario* has so well taught me to conquer myself that I am resolved to make inclination bend to duty, tho' duty deprives me for ever of all which I think valuable in life next to you. And therefore I have always taken care to conceal from him, and every one but yourself, the tender sentiments I feel for him, as modesty teaches me to do. Neither would it avail to do otherwise; since fate has placed such an impassable bar between us, as renders it imprac-

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licable for me ever to be blest with him for a partner in life. So that you need be under no apprehensions.

Lovely sister, says the Prince, give me leave to set you right. Obedience is a holy virtue, but is love less sacred? I highly commend your resolution of not suffering duty to give way to propensity. This is worthy the noble sentiments our birth ought to inspire us with, and perfectly agrees with the heroic maxims we jointly owe to *Hilario's* instructions. Yet may not inclination go hand in hand with duty? Fix not your choice while our royal parent lives, without his consent: but are you obliged to fix or declare it, while he has the power of annulling it? You know he is upon the verge of changing a temporal for an eternal crown, and though it ought to be our joint prayer for the preservation of his life, yet what will our prayers avail to alter the decrees of providence. At his decease you are sensible you will be at my disposal, and on whom can I better bestow you, or you *yourself*, than on him whose labours have wholly tended to make us worthy children of such a parent, and in that alone truly great and royal. It is true, *Hilario* is inferior in birth to you. But! Merit levels all: and the man, who labours and is able to make men worthy to be monarchs, deserves to be a King if he is not one. So the maid, whose perfections are truly royal, is worthy a diadem whether born to one or not. Such, such is too lovely *Pulcheria*; and hence I think it matter of true ambition, to aspire to her preferably

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ferably to all princesses, whose equality with me in descent, for want of her merit, places them at a distance infinitely below that charming creature. For heaven's sake then, dearest sister, assist me with your advice and interest with *Pulcheria*, and prevail with *Hilario* to do the same, to make me happy; and be assured of my consulting every means to contribute to your perfect happiness in each other.

The princess return'd her sincerest thanks to her brother for his generous offer, and assured him that she would use all her interest with his fair mistress, but implored him withal, to lay aside all thoughts of interesting himself in her affair, not only for that she look'd upon it as impracticable on account of the distance between her and her dear *Hilario*, but because, well as she loved him, she was resolved to keep him in a perpetual ignorance of it; not being able to support the thought of his being privy to a weakness in her, which she could not consider in herself without blushing. Leave that to me, sweet sister, said the prince, I am already fully acquainted with *Hilario's* respectful tenderness for you, and have acquainted him with what I remark'd in you for him: which I did to save you both, as you are both dear to me, the pain of revealing your sentiments to each other. So that you have nothing more to do than to taste the innocent sweets of your mutual love, with that discretion which you both have at command, till it shall be in my power to crown your union with the sacred bands of marriage.

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Here sudden confusion heighten'd her royal highness's beauteous teint with a crimson blush, modest resentment sparkled in her eyes, and the charming creature assumed such a becoming air of noble loftiness as spoke her inward struggles between joy and shame. Pleased as she was, she was upon the point of chiding her royal brother for betraying her idol-secret to *Hilario*, when *Hilario* enter'd the room, and love bid resentment give way to tenderness.

Finding by their manner that their royal highnesses were on a matter of privacy, the young nobleman was going to withdraw, when the prince, with leave from his sister's eyes, call'd him back; and presenting them to each other bid them be happy in a perfect union assuring them that he would one day make them as compleatly so, as their souls could wish. When *Hilario* had got the better of surprize, he return'd his respectful thanks to the prince in the most grateful terms he was master of. After which kneeling to the royal maid with profoundest reverence, he pay'd her an awful, tender homage, such as the most submissive love alone could suggest. The princess, after some reluctance and confusion arising from virgin modesty, rewarded his addresses with an equal share of tenderness and gave him her lovely hand to kiss. When the prince had thus far succeeded, he attempted to rally them both on the subject of their love; but the awkward constraint with which he did it, spoke how much he wish'd to enjoy a happiness equal to theirs, in the company of his dearest *Fulcheria*. However he did
not

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not think proper to interrupt their first entertainment of love with saying much on that head, and therefore contenting himself at parting with recommending his love warmly to their zeal, he left them to each other, and retired to his own apartment to enjoy the gloomy comfort of melancholly musing.

I fancy, sir, says *Lactifer*, the Princess and *Hilario* were not backward in promoting the Prince's happiness with the fair *Pulcheria*, since their own felicity depended so much upon it. Neither could they find it a very difficult matter to prevail with one, whose tender heart pleaded full as much in his favour as they possibly could do. You judge right, sir, says the Knight; the Prince could not have better advocates than these, whom inclination and interest render'd incorruptibly zealous and irresistibly eloquent in his cause, and it was impossible he should lose it with such able pleaders, especially when the fair judge was so prepossess'd in his favour. In fact, they succeeded so well, that, in spite of all the struggles of modesty and duty, they drew from *Pulcheria* a confession, that of all mankind the Prince was the only one her heart was capable of liking, and that nothing could restrain her from daring to love him with the most tender passion, but the profound respect which she owed him as a subject; that she was perfectly sensible of the unapproachable height to which fate had rais'd him above her: and therefore was determin'd ever to remain single; since duty, respect to him, and every virtue befitting her station, forbid her aspiring to him. There

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needed no more to betray the disposition of this young virgin. The Prince was not long left a stranger to it, he used every argument love could dictate, to convince her that inequality of birth is no legitimate impediment to mutual love, and at length he prevail'd. In a word, they agree'd to love each other with inviolable affection, and to keep their loves private 'till time should allow them to enjoy the sweets of their guiltless passion without restraint.

And now the four happy lovers became inseparable companions, and enjoy'd the inexpressible delight of entertaining one another in common, on the subject of their loves. State and ceremonies of royalty obliged them to be sometimes parted for a few hours; but that was the only uneasiness they seem'd capable of feeling. When they were together, every visit from any else was an insufferable intrusion to them, their felicity was so center'd in the sole conversation of one another. This felicity indeed they enjoy'd, for some time, uninterrupted, and even unsuspected: the constant retirement of the Prince and his sister being attributed to their attachment to study and intellectual improvements; and the posts of *Hilario* and *Pulcheria*, which required them to be always about their royal persons, removing all observation and suspicion with regard to them: so that nothing seem'd capable of disturbing them from the peaceful enjoyment of their innocent amours. However, secure as they thought they were, they soon found themselves very much mistaken; and experience taught them

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them that danger is often nigheſt at hand when moſt overlook'd.

Lucio had now got the ſtart of his father, and was at the head of the miniſtry. He found the ſecret to inſinuate himſelf ſo far into the affections of the old King, who was ſuperannuated and in the laſt decline of life, that nothing was done, relating to public affairs, without his ſuggeſtion and influence. And *Sempronio* the father, looking upon this as injurious to his reputation and derogatory from his authority, inasmuch as it made him appear a mere cypher in the adminiſtration, he undertook to thwart his ſon, by vigorously oppoſing all his meaſures. Wherefore the ſon, reſolved not to ſtop his own ambitious career, repreſented his father to the King, in an artful manner, as incapable any longer of managing public affairs. So that *Sempronio* was compel'd to reſign his poſts in favour of his ſon, and retire into the country, where he had leaſure enough to reflect on the folly of his paſt conduct, in educating his ſon in the deſtructive principles of falſe ambition: And the repentance, which the frequency of this feeling reflection created in him, ſoon put an end to his life. On ſuch a baſe parricide the ungrateful, unnatural, ambitious *Lucio* ſtep'd into the firſt poſt and became the prime and greateſt ſubject in the Kingdom. But he was ſtill a ſubject; and nothing leſs could gratify his ambition than a ſhare in royalty: But this could be obtain'd by no other means than by marrying the Princeſs. However it could not be eaſily effected as things then ſtood, 'till the Prince ſhould firſt be married,

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and an end put to the quarrel still subsisting between *Orontius* and *Stilico* King of the *Visigoths*; wherefore he determin'd to leave no means untried to effect both.

The *Gauls* had long waged a bloody war with the *Visigoths*, who inhabited that part of *France* since call'd *Burgundy*, from the *Burgs*, a tribe of *Vandals*, settling there; and this war had proved a very advantageous one to the *Gauls*. But it was no difficult matter for *Lucio*, who had the King's ear, to persuade him that a peace would be more advantageous. Accordingly he obtain'd full powers to make one on such terms as he should think fit. Thus empower'd, he sent to *Alexia* (since called *Alize*) which tho' now but a small village of no note, was then a powerful city, where *Stilico* kept his court, to whom he offer'd peace, upon the single condition of giving his daughter in marriage to the young prince. The King of the *Visigoths* gladly listen'd to the proposal, not only because he was extremely sick of a war, which if continued any longer must end in the total subversion of his kingdom, but because he had no hopes of marrying his daughter, on account of some known natural defects which render'd it morally impossible she should ever bear issue. But that was far from being any objection to *Lucio*, who hoped, by this means, that he might one day mount the throne of *Gaul* himself, should she chance to out-live the Prince, her intended husband, and he be able to compass a marriage with the Princess his royal sister. This was doing things effectually, had every thing succeeded,
and

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and killing many birds at a single shot. But how blind does the fascinating glare of that comet ambition render those who fix their eyes too stedfastly on it!

Disadvantageous and shameful as this peace and the match, by which it was to be cemented, were, *Lucio* brought the King to consent to it. And tho' the Prince, when inform'd of the near part he had to act in it, used all his interest to oppose it, the King was so wedded to *Lucio's* sentiments, and *Lucio* so obstinately bent on pursuing his own ambitious views, that the treaty was absolutely concluded, hostages were exchanged on both sides, and *Hilario*, by the King's order, was pitch'd upon for one of the hostages.

Every one saw the disadvantages of, and cry'd out shame against this infamous peace, except the King; who was so infatuated by his opinion of *Lucio*, that he was at a loss how to recompense the author and contriver of it; and therefore left it to his favourite to chose his own reward, promising to grant him any one request within the reach of regal authority. *Lucio*, who was too much enslaved by his ambition to neglect so fair an opportunity of gratifying it, return'd his majesty thanks, and, without hesitation, demanded his royal daughter in marriage; which the King was blind enough to grant, and even order'd preparations to be made for celebrating both nuptials together, with the utmost speed and solemnity. So fascinated are the greatest princes, when content to see thro' the eyes of a corrupt and daring minister! While *Oron-*
tius

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tius held the reins in his own hand, no prince ever excel'd him in wisdom and every royal virtue; but now age sunk the man into indolence, and indolence lost the monarch in the minor.

I shall not pretend to describe, sir, says the Knight to *Lactifer*, the deadly distress which this double mortal blow brought upon our four illustrious lovers. Their union was so intimate that they were all equal sharers in every pain as well as pleasure which affected any one of them; and therefore it is hard to say whether the Prince and *Hilario*, or the Princess and *Pulcheria* were the most alarm'd at the danger of losing their beloved objects; or whether the Princess and her dear *Hilario* felt most for their brother and sister, or these for the former. Certain it is that their own griefs, already too acute, were doubly sharpen'd by those of one another. For the rest I shall not pretend to give an idea of what all terms are too faint to express. Let us leave them to the melancholy solace of indulging their just sorrows. Such as have had the misfortune to be in the like sad situation, will own them to be more easily felt than told: neither is it to my present purpose to paint to you the anguish of distressful love, but to give you an idea of the fatal consequences of unbounded ambition.

Notwithstanding all the means which the Prince, *Hilario*, and their lovely mistresses try'd to ward off the blow and to obviate the dangers which threaten'd them, their endeavours were attended with no success; the King was not to be dissuaded by any but *Lucio*, and *Lucio* was not

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not of a humour to give up so glorious a prize, when upon the point of seizing it: so that our hapless lovers were reduced to the most perplexing dilemma. All the prospect they had before them was, either to train a miserable life for ever apart from each other, or betake themselves to a voluntary exile: tho' the latter, besides being liable to dangers and hardships to which they were little fitted and absolute strangers, seem'd almost impracticable, on account of *Hilario's* being hostage in an enemy's country, whose interest it was to keep a narrow watch over him to prevent his escape. However as they deem'd all other dangers and difficulties preferable to separation, they resolved on their flight, and concerted their measures so well, that by the means of some trusty servants, they escaped into *Britain*: where they resolved to wait with patience 'till it should please heaven to be more propitious to their loves. And as the divine providence seldom leaves virtue long in distress, and never suffers the good to be tempted beyond their strength, they soon saw an end of their sufferings.

The Prince, some time before the day he pitch'd upon for making his escape, took care to give secret intelligence of his design to *Hilario*, who found means to gain over one of the guards appointed by *Stilico* to attend him. This guard, won by the charms of all-persuasive gold, assisted him in his flight, and waited on him to *Britain*, where the prince had agreed to join him, when assured of his arrival thither. *Hilario* was no sooner missing, than diligent search was
made

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made after him all over *Stilico's* dominions; but he had taken too good precautions to be stopt, and arrived safe to his journey's end. When the King of the *Visigoths* found it was to no purpose to make any farther research there, he dispatch'd a courier to *Orontius*, to complain of *Hilario's* escape, and to demand him back; for he did not in the least doubt but that he was return'd to *Paris*. As soon as *Orontius* was inform'd of what had happen'd, he was exceedingly enraged; and deeming his honour (of which he was ever nicely jealous) concern'd to repair the breach of a treaty he had voluntarily (however inconsiderately) enter'd into, he order'd diligent search to be made after him all over the kingdom. But finding all enquiry after *Hilario* unsuccessful, he thought nothing less could suffice to heal his suffering fame than to send the brother in his stead: he was bent upon it, and, however necessary *Lucio's* presence at *Paris* seem'd to be at that juncture, no remonstrances of his could alter the King's resolution. Make no reply, *Lucio*, says his majesty, our honour is at stake, and the word of Kings should be too sacred to admit the least prevarication, or even suspicion of it: your stay at *Alexia* will not be long: soon as the nuptials of our royal son are solemnized with the *Visigothian* Princess, you will be at liberty; and during your absence, ourself will give orders that all things shall be in readiness to celebrate yours with our dearest daughter at your return; in the mean time depart, and depart instantly, to wipe off the stain which our glory suffers from the escape of your faithless

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less brother; we can give no greater proof of our royal sincerity than by sending our chief and best beloved subject a pledge of it; be assured of our royal favour and the impatience with which we shall wait your return to our gracious embraces. Poor *Lucio* was forced to obey; the King was old and positive, and he had made him too fond of the scheme, so that he had no one to blame but himself. No sooner was news brought back of *Lucio's* arrival at the court of *Alexia*, than the Prince with his dear sister and the charming *Pulcheria* made their escape in the habit of peasants, and arrived safe and soon in *Britain*, where they met with *Hilario*, to the mutual inexpressible joy of them all.

When the flight of their royal highnesses was known, *Orontius* was a good deal astonish'd at it; but the decay'd condition of his understanding suffer'd him not to take it much to heart, more especially as he doubted not but they were in some part of the kingdom. However he immediately sent word to the King of the *Visigoths* of the Princes being missing; assuring him withal that his intentions were still the same with regard to the stipulated alliance, and that he would use all possible diligence to effect it with utmost speed. But *Stilico* was so far from being satisfied with the plain dealing of *Orontius*, that he took the whole for an artifice made use of to elude a treaty, which he now believed had been only set on foot, by contrivance of *Lucio*, to gain time for the execution of some cunning stratagem he had in view, the more effectually to subdue the *Visigoths*.
He

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He was naturally of a hasty, suspicious, vehement temper, and bloody of disposition; therefore thinking himself betray'd, and betray'd by *Lucio*, whom he knew to be prime agent in all his master's affairs, he vented all his resentment against him; and without any regard to consequences, caused him immediately to be cruelly put to death, with the messenger who brought the account of the Prince's retreat.

Thus fell this unhappy slave to his ambition, by the very means he made use of to gratify it; and thus does the divine justice, even in this life, overtake those who trample under foot the sacred ties of duty, fidelity, and religion, as well as the tender considerations of blood and nature, to follow the lawless pursuits of a criminal passion.

When *Orontius* heard of the outrage committed on the person of his favorite, he lost all temper, resolv'd on revenge, and resolv'd never to make peace with the *Visigoths* 'till he had punish'd their base treatment of his minister, with subversion and slavery. But this would not bring *Lucio* to life again, neither was it in the King's power to effect: he forgot he was ninety, an age very little fitted for the toils of a conqueror; however he was preparing to make a vigorous war with the unjust and bloody King of the *Visigoths*, when he was seiz'd with a violent cold, which, ending in a pleurisy, carry'd him off in a few days.

The Prince had from time to time been privately inform'd of all that pass'd, and at the time of the King's sickening was upon his return

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turn home with his dear companions, on purpose to comfort and cherish his aged parent, but came too late to receive his dying breath. Some hours after the King's decease, their royal highnesses, with the lovely *Pulcheria* and her brother, arrived, while the people were still assembled round the palace, giving pathetic signs of unutterable grief for the loss of their idolized sovereign, and bemoaning with the most tender expressions of love and loyalty the absence of the royal issue. Tho' their royal highnesses were inconsolable at the death of their princely parent, they were forced, instead of retiring to give their grief a vent, to shew themselves to the public, whose sorrow immediately changed to the most lively sense of extatic joy, at so unexpectedly pleasing a sight.

When the funeral exequies of the deceased monarch were over, and our illustrious lovers had indulged some time in bewailing the good *Orontius* and unhappy *Lucio*, the young King and his lovely *Pulcheria* were wedded and crown'd, and her royal highness married to her dear *Hilario*, on one and the same day, with a magnificence never known before, and never to be exceeded in after times. They all lived in an uninterrupted harmony for a long series of years, and died blest with a fair, virtuous, and numerous progeny. Thus does heaven, even in this life, liberally reward the virtuous; so true it is that virtue is ever the most successful policy, and that the divine bounty is ever solicitous to exalt those, who, regardless of the possession of honours, direct all their ambition to meriting them,

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them, according to what is written, that *He who humbles himself shall be exalted.*

What do you think of this little history, sir? says the Knight to *Lactifer*. I think, sir, says *Lactifer*, that the delicacy of it's strokes are inimitable, and sufficient to give us a perfectly clear idea of the material difference between false and true ambition. This lifts us to the felicity it points us out, and brings us, unexpectedly, to the glory it directs us to shun; the other, like an *ignis fatuus*, fascinates and deceives us, holding out, at a distance, a false and fugitive light, only to decoy us after it into danger and destruction. What inevitable ruin and infamy would not *Lucio* have involv'd his country in, had not providence averted the mischief, by turning it on the head of the contriver! But how much more happy were *Hilario* and the truly fair *Pulcheria*, in pursuing the dictates of their wise mother! If the divine goodness was so liberal in rewarding their virtuous ambition on this side the grave; what ideas may we not form of the felicity prepared for them beyond death: Or rather, what ideas of ours can equal the immense flood of glory circumscribing their immortality in that blissful state of which their felicity in this life was but a faint and imperfect relish! It is certainly evident, sir, says the Knight, that our ambition must ever be false, while it deviates from eternal truth; and will of course lead us wide of the mark of real glory whenever it pursues any other object: Because there is really no glory, felicity, or salvation, but in that eternal truth and a strict adhesion to it.

But

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But we have no leisure at present for reasoning, the time grows late and the hour warns us to part.

They then parted; the Knight perfectly satisfied with the impression his story had made on the mind of *Lactifer*, and *Lactifer* as pleased with having drawn thence some truths, to which he had never before given attention. This is the case with the major part of human species, who, too much taken up with the sollicitudes of life, seldom allow themselves time to draw from events, the truth and solidity of God's predictions in holy writ.

End of the seventh conversation.



CONVER-

CONVERSATIONS

Moral and Entertaining.

Eighth CONVERSATION.

THE badness of the weather hinder'd our two gentlemen from meeting the next day in the walks as usual: wherefore each went where he thought he might spend his time most agreeably. *Lactifer* went to see a baron and his lady of his acquaintance, just come from *Paris*, where they had been married about six months before, to the inexpressible joy of both. Our traveller, during his stay in that city, had been distinguish'd by each of them with a particular share of intimacy, even so far as to be made a confident in their courtship: which, tho' it had been of some standing, was carried on with a great deal of warmth on both sides. At length the bans were publish'd, the time was agree'd upon for the wedding, and *Lactifer*, invited to the solemnity

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lemnity and entertainment. But affairs or curiosity calling him away before the day prefix'd, he was not present at the marriage-ceremony. They acquainted him however by letter soon after with the accomplishment of their wishes, in such terms as left him no room to doubt of their excess of felicity. And he on his side made the polite returns usual on such occasions. Nevertheless he thought it a duty of good-breeding to seize the first opportunity, after their arrival at the *Hague*, to pay them his personal congratulations. And as he imagin'd the compliment would be no less pleasing than seasonable, he could not help flattering himself with the expectation of sharing in their happiness, by becoming a witness to it. But *Lactifer* was yet single, his reason was uninfected with false prejudice, and therefore he thought as all married persons should think; not as the generality do.

He went then and was received in a very courteous manner by both, yet so as to be made sensible that his presence was more grateful than his compliment. There was a good deal of company, and *Lactifer* among the rest was importuned to stay supper; to which he acquiesced, desirous of diving, if possible, into the cause of the unexpected indifference he perceived in this new-married couple towards each-other.

The entertainment was elegant, and the invited extremely gay, all but the baron and his lady; who, tho' they forced themselves to excite their guests to mirth by their example, could

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could not however conceal from *Lactifer's* penetration the secret restraint they were under. He plainly saw they liked every one there better than each other; and if they were not absolutely restless together, each would however have been compleatly easy had the other been absent. And yet they neither quarrel'd nor contradicted one another, but behaved with civility on both sides, even to a fault: Tho' our traveller could not help being as little at his ease, as if they had actually differ'd; being himself of opinion that such behaviour, as would be the height of good-breeding between strangers, is generally down-right rudeness between man and wife.

The serious reflections which so unexpected a scene raised in *Lactifer's* mind threw him into a musing, which created a good deal of genteel rallery. The company would have it, he was in love; and each strove, who should be most witty upon him. He defended himself pretty well against the rest; but the baron and his lady were almost too many for him. It was not that he was at any loss to answer them, but he was too well acquainted with human nature to risk jesting upon disagreeable truths. He therefore contented himself with saying, that if he really was in love, he should neither blush to own it, nor apprehend it's consequences; since the example, he had from persons he so much esteem'd, was sufficient to encourage one less bold than himself to take a pride in that passion. The delicacy of this well-bred evasion had it's desired effect; rallery subsided,
and

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and subjects of conversation less interesting took place, till the desert was removed.

After supper, the weather being again fine, and the evening warm and serene, the ladies chose to take a walk on the terrass; and as they shew'd an inclination to be by themselves, politeness obliged the gentlemen, not to interrupt them, to continue at table. *Lactifer*, who was anxious to know for certain whether his surmises were just or not, judg'd this a fair opportunity, and resolved not to neglect it. Monsieur le *Baron*, says he, matrimony seems to agree with you extraordinarily well: I think I never saw you look better. Sir, says the baron, I am obliged to you for the compliment; but you will find it a difficult matter to persuade me that matrimony contributes any thing to my good looks. It may be a wholesome draught for aught I can prove to the contrary; but it is a very bitter one; and if it has not disagreed with my constitution, it has at least given such a strange turn to the muscles of my face, that I don't know myself again, if I look in a glass. You are very merry, sir, says *Lactifer*: You would give us I suppose to understand, that, since you have been married, you have kept looking on her ladyship's fair face till you have forgotten your own. No, *Lactifer*; but we have look'd on one-another till we have found what fools we were ever to love each other. In short marriage is a ridiculous piece of witchcraft; it turns the most violent love into simple liking, which seldom fails to end in hatred. I dare

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say,

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say, says *Lactifer*, that will never be the case with you and your lady. Indeed, sir, says the baron, you are mistaken. It is true we once loved one another very well: you are sensible we did. But we were too fond, before marriage, to be long so after. Tho' I really believe, to do my wife justice, her fondness outlived mine; and there was her fault. Do you call her fondness a fault, says *Lactifer*? Why did you marry her but to secure her affection to you? All that is true, *Lactifer*. But too much love is troublesome, and I grew sick of it. Alas, says *Lactifer*, how cruel is the lot of woman, hapless woman, design'd by nature to make the substance of our happiness, and in ours to secure her own; yet through our fickleness, doom'd to be made wretched if possess'd of charms, or to be despised without them! Women are the most abused part of the creation. Before marriage, their coyness is call'd pride; their facility, forwardness; their diffidence is derided, and their credulity betray'd: when married, indifference in them is interpreted infidelity, the moderation of their love is construed indifference, and the excess of it cloy's us. Such is the levity of our sex, and such the undeserved misfortune of theirs! But I am growing serious without designing it: for I can never think, sir, that you are in earnest, or that you, who took so much pains to merit her ladyship's affections, could easily consent to renounce them. Ah *Lactifer*, says the baron, 'tis a sign you are not married: before I was so, I thought like you; but matrimony has made me
wife

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wife. I cannot but say, that while the honeymoon lasted, I was mightily delighted with loving her and being equally beloved by her: still it was the same thing over again, the continuance grew tiresome, and therefore I soon taught her to be contented with liking me; till now, thank heaven, we are happily arrived to hate one-another as heartily as e'er a well-bred couple in *Europe*. Is it possible, sir, says *Lactifer*, that what you tell me can be fact? It is real fact, sir, replies the baron. I could easily comprehend it, should any one besides yourself, sir, tell me so, says *Lactifer*.

The generality of married people, I believe, owe the short-lived continuation of their mutual love to their own want of discretion. They are apt to treat one-another with too gross a familiarity, which must and will sooner or later beget contempt, a canker, which, once it gains admittance in the heart, never ceases to prey upon love till it has utterly destroy'd it. This is *One* of the sources, and a very principal one, whence so many unhappy marriages spring. What is it that first begets a mutual liking between two persons, and cherishes that liking into love? Is it not that respectful decency, that easy affability, that tender complaisance, that ready condescendence, that awful fear of offending, and that chearful eagerness to please, which are ever made use of in courtship? If then they are so successful in begetting love before marriage, must they not afterwards be as useful to cherish it? If good-breeding, respect, and reciprocal condescend-

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ence were such useful hand-maids in courtship, it is the greatest of follies to discard them in wedlock. Love is a delicate existence, and cannot possibly subsist by any thing opposite to the principles which first gave it being. No, the parents which begot it must cherish it, or it dies. And the only way for married persons never to lose the pleasures of growing love, during life, is to continue their courtship till death. For want of which precaution, how few married persons do we see, in whom love outlives the first glut of passion, at least on one side?

You see then, sir, adds *Lactifer*, that I am not at a loss to account for the hasty decay of affection in the generality of married persons. But I cannot apply the same reasons to you, and your lady, whose education and sense must lift you above those grossities which the vulgar are too apt to run into; and therefore I am quite at a stand, for the true cause of your mutual dislikes, if you chuse to have me call them so. To speak the truth, *Lactifer*, says the baron, we were never rude to one another; we always behave with the utmost good-breeding, and even hate in a civil manner. That is not the behaviour I speak of, sir, says *Lactifer*. The formal civility which is made use of to keep strangers at a distance can never be capable of begetting or maintaining love between man and wife. It may serve to hide mutual hatred from the undiscerning multitude: but as it is at best but palliated rudeness to each other, it must have the same effect

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as ill-bred familiarity, and end in mutual contempt. Surely all familiarity is not uncivil, nor all civility free from rudeness. That familiarity which never breaks through the rules of decency and due respect must be civil: and formal civility between persons, who ought to be intimate, cannot but be rude. There is then a medium between the stiffness of an affected overstrain'd good-breeding, and the offensive ease of a contemptuous familiarity. And that is such an affectionate intimacy as proceeds from, and expresses, confidence and respect. Such is the familiarity with which married persons ought to treat each other; and such alone can preserve love unalter'd and unalterable.

You say very right, *Lactifer*, says the baron, but this is a very troublesome expedient, where the end it is design'd for is it self troublesome. For my own part I have told you, I was tired of my wife's love, and therefore why would you have me take so much pains to preserve it? How different is this discourse, says *Lactifer*, from that you held seven months ago! I grant it, says the baron; but then I was not married. Nothing could then equal my tenderness for her, and nothing, methought, could make me wish to love her less. Even now I believe, nothing but matrimony could have done it. I should love her still with the same passion I ever did, was she not my wife. Has marriage then made any alteration in her? Why I know not, *Lactifer*; it has and it has not. She is the same woman she was; her

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sense, her beauty, her good-nature, are not diminish'd; her virtue is the same, and every charm, I fancy, is still the same to every one else; but they are not such to me. She was my mistress, and then I loved her: she is my wife, and therefore I hate her. That single circumstance of wife is more than sufficient to eclipse her most shining qualities to my eye. Pardon me, sir, says *Lactifer*, this is not reasoning according to that good sense you are master of. You married the lady because you loved her: and to what end did you marry her, but to possess the object you loved as a wife? This you proposed to yourself as the greatest happiness you could be blest with. And does a blessing cease to be such by possession? If so; it is not to be coveted. No, *Lactifer*, says the baron; but, methinks wives, if they be blessings, like all other earthly blessings, should be in our power to relinquish: since liberty in the possession of them would give a zest to enjoyment, which the want of variety in them is apt to pall. That is, sir, says *Lactifer*, you would have wives put upon the footing of such harlots, as when some remains of modesty restrains them from gratifying the utmost indecencies of an extravagant lecher, are dismiss'd at pleasure. This is *Another* of the principles to which so many unhappy matches are owing.

A libidinous man sees a young lady, whose beauty and graces raise in him a concupiscence, which nothing less than enjoyment can quell. He is restless to possess her, his imagination

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is heated, his invention on the rack till his lust be gratified; and without once examining into the real cause of this eagerness he fancies himself in love; whereas the true source of his passion is meer leudness. However on one side he is bent upon enjoying her, and on the other her forbidding modesty tells him that but to attempt to debauch her would be a sure way to lose her. So that he despairs of gratifying his lust by any other means than marrying her. Upon such vicious motives then he resolves to wed her, and does it without once questioning himself, whether or not he is disposed to reward with gratitude and good usage that virtue which bestows itself upon him. What wonder then that a lecher, when once he has glutted his sensuality in the enjoyment of a modest woman, and begins to find her virtue and constancy a reproach to his levity and infidelity, and her modesty a curb to his lascivious extravagance, should hate and ill use her? And can a man of this stamp expect any blessing on an engagement, which, on his side, deserves not so much the name of honourable marriage as palliated whoredom? Or must not a woman, however she might before think she had reason to love him, sovereignly despise such a husband, once she discovers how unworthy an object she has thrown away her choicest favours upon?

The baron was too deeply stung with these truths, and too much taken up with the application of them, to make any reply. Wherefore another of the company, a very silly fel-

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low, but by profession a wit, thought to be very smart upon *Lactifer*. Sir, said he to him, do you then imagin a man can always feed upon the same diet? Capon is very good eating: yet can a man live always upon capon? Would not you yourself be glad now and then of a bit of partridge or pheasant? I know not sir, says *Lactifer*, but this joke may serve to make some men merry. But how much weight it has in itself will best be seen by weighing it in the ballance of truth. Certain it is that the fickleness of a depraved appetite can be no standard rule to regulate right reason by. And yet I am not unwilling to allow some analogy between the animal appetites in themselves, and those yearnings which are the immediate effects of reason in intelligent beings. But I believe this allowance will rather diminish than add to the weight of your sarcasm. For it must be own'd, that, while the stomach is in a right tone, it will never nauseate any food wholesome in itself. For a proof of this, let us descend to the brutes, in whom the animal appetites are specifically the same as in us, and who notwithstanding, while in health, never seek or covet a change of aliment when left to themselves: tho', without recurring to them, we shall find whole nations of men, whom effeminacy has not yet vitiated, feeding upon the same nourriture their whole lives long. Without luxury every human appetite would do the like; and where it does grow tired of the diet it feeds upon, 'tis a sure symptom that either it was depraved in the choice of that diet,

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diet, or is so in rejecting it. In like manner, when once reason has directed a man to the choice of a proper object of his love, either his reason was depraved in the choice, or nothing but the corruption of that reason could alienate him from the object of love he has chosen, while the object subsists. To make this doctrine clear let us apply it. Why did the baron love his lady so passionately as to seek her for a wife? He will doubtless say, that his reason told him she was lovely. Either then his reason was depraved in telling him so; or if it was right, as it sufficiently appears to have been, by what himself has own'd; then it is the corruption of that reason which now tells him to hate her.

But do you suppose, sir, that love is always guided by reason? I suppose, answer'd *Lactifer*, that the love of a rational being, who means to act consistently, ought to be so. And I have too much complaisance for the baron to think he engaged in an affair of so high importance as a state for life, without consulting reason: Especially since he himself seems to own he did. For he acknowledges her ladyship to have beauty, sense, good nature, virtue, and every charm worthy his love, and only complains of possessing still what reason did direct, or would, if consulted, have directed him to love, and love bade him covet to possess. Tho' should I suppose him to have engaged his affections to the lovely creature without consulting reason; that would no ways exempt him from the indispen-

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able duty of loving her still. Since if chance or caprice were so lucky to help his love to an object which right reason must approve; nothing but the corruption of reason can induce him to reject her.

I will not take upon me to defend the baron's cause, says another gentleman; but give me leave to ask you, *Lactifer*, are none to marry but those who are in love? If by love, sir, you mean such a vehemence of passion as renders the persons it possesses incapable of subsisting without an intimate union with the object they love; I own, says *Lactifer*, it may be lawful to marry without being thus far in love. Still I hold that none can lawfully engage in wedlock, without seeing something in each-other lovely enough to induce them to fix their mutual happiness in one-another. For reason can never direct any intelligent being to seek happiness in an object, without considering it as lovely; and what it considers as lovely, it must love. Surely then that must be unlawful in rational beings, which reason cannot assent to.

True, *Lactifer*, says the gentleman, we seldom engage in matrimony without something lovely to attract us to it. But do you think that is always the woman? No: I myself marry'd my late wife; when I neither loved her nor liked her. And yet she had something lovely enough to attract me; that was her fortune. Must I then love her because her fortune was lovely? No, sir, says *Lactifer*, doubtless you was not obliged to love her
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for her fortune; neither ought you to have married her for it, if you could not love her. Marriage is intended by heaven for a union of hearts; and the fortune your lady brought you with herself, she gave you in consequence of that supposed union; which, I dare say, you at least counterfeited on your part. It was in virtue then of that supposed union you possess'd her fortune, and that alone could give you a just title to it. If therefore you defrauded her of that union, that love, she had a right to claim in virtue of the marriage vow; your possession of her fortune could be no better than plunder, and your enjoyment of her person must be worse than harlotry.

You are very severe, *Lactifer*, says the Gentleman. It is truth, sir, which is so severe, not I; I say no more, says *Lactifer*, than That dictates: there needs no speculation to comprehend it; the noon-day sun is not so clear to the sight, as it is evident to reason, that you could not be just to your wife without loving her. Had she not loved you, she would never have bestow'd herself and fortune upon you; and therefore if her fortune had not intitled her to your love, as I must still insist it did, gratitude at least made it an indispensable debt of nature, on your side, to requite her love with love.

I must set you right, *Lactifer*, says the Gentleman; I believe there was no love lost on either side: my wife neither bestow'd herself nor her fortune upon me; she was too young to be at her own disposal; the whole was done by

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her friends, without so much as consulting her 'till they put her to bed to me.

I understand you, sir, says *Lactifer*; yours was a match of interest, and not of affection; tho' that will not justify a man's engaging in such a match, much less does it exempt him from fulfilling the duties of a husband. The only means a man has left of making some satisfaction and restitution to a woman, whom he has robb'd of liberty and made a sacrifice to his avarice, is to endeavour to render her insensible of the injury he has done her, by sacrificing his affection to her, and making her happiness the measure of his own. Tho' it is most often the case, that when a man has had so little generosity, and so much art as to over-reach unwary parents or guardians in the minority of a young fortune, he generally looks upon his acquisition rather as a purchase than a prize; and the pleasure he conceives in the advantages of her fortune, his wife, whom he considers as an incumbrance upon it, contributes to allay. Such is frequently the consequence of matches, where interest is principally consulted. This is *Another* no less fatal source of wretchedness in a state of wedlock, and too often experienced among persons of rank. For which reason I cannot but deem it one of the greatest misfortunes which can befall young ladies of beauty and merit, to be born to too great a fortune. They are generally sure to fall hapless victims to the avarice of a suitor and a parent or guardian; who, without once consulting them, as if they and their happiness were no ways concern'd, buy them and sell them like cattle at a fair:

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fair: for to what else can we compare such marriages, but to the bargains of graziers? So the fortunes be but equal, no matter how little the hearts are proportion'd. And what blessing can attend a contract, by which so open a violation is committed of the laws of nature as must be a lively reproach to all religious and civil polity? For can it be lawful to force the consent of a free agent to it's irreparable ruin? And surely it is manifest force, when a young creature is thus disposed of, without being consulted; or is consulted, only to be told that she must give her consent. Can we be surpris'd at any misconduct she is afterwards guilty of? Can a husband, thus forced upon her, be put in sure possession of her future affection, which alone can make her a good wife; when, perhaps, his disagreeable qualities are even sufficient to alienate her heart, was he already in possession of it? But this is the least of some parents concern. No matter what becomes of a child of their own bowels, so that they gratify the passion, whatever one it be, which holds their worm-eating souls in slavery. Worse in this, as more capable of reflection, than the vermin they copy after; who, solicitous to engender their likeness, desert it when they have done. And what numbers of monsters of this kind is not human shape disgraced by!

If avarice does not induce every father to force upon his daughter a worthless wretch of his own chusing; does not the incontinency of many, at least, leave exposed to equal misery, a poor deserving girl, whose filial tenderness merits every thing from them? For how often shall we not see

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see a goatish widower, his wife yet warm in her grave, so forgetful of the paternal tenderness he owes to a virtuous, nicely dutiful daughter of unexceptionable conduct, as shamefully to sacrifice her happiness to his own lecherous wantonness in a second venture; by reducing her to the fatal necessity of throwing herself away, at hazard, into the arms of any base brute, to escape the corroding indifference of a wifish father, and the tyrannical oppression of a base, selfish, envious, jealous step-mother? And what charms can marriage have for any man, blest in a daughter endow'd with every virtue, and as fit to manage his family as her deceased parent? What, I say, can induce him to marry but lust, mere, rank lust; such as renders him worthy to be stript of that manhood he prostitutes in so unmanly a manner? Ah! Why is there not a law for castrating such unnatural rampant parents? But providence, perhaps, has so ordain'd it, that the punishment spared them in this life may add to the acuteness of misery hoarding up for them in the next.

O detestable accurst parents! what miseries do you frequently entail upon your unfortunate children, and what vengeance on yourselves, by giving them up thus a prey to lucre or lust, which cannot secure happiness to them, nor to yourselves!

You seem, *Lactifer*, says a fourth in company, to lay all the stress of happiness in marriage on love; as if a man could not behave well to his wife without loving her. Doubtless I do, says *Lactifer*; for tho' a man may so far get the better of his temper as to behave with civility, and even kindness, to the very person he hates:

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no one, I believe, will say that a man can place an entire confidence in one who is indifferent to him; and that indifference, which a want of confidence necessarily betrays, is downright ill usage in a man to his wife, who ought to be the repository of his inmost pleasures and pains. Love then is absolutely necessary in man and wife, to make them behave rightly towards each other; and the want of that right behaviour in either, must be call'd, as it really is, ill usage.

When I talk of love between man and wife; I do not mean that silly fondness, which is more the offspring of effeminacy and the traitor of a weak passion than the child of reason; but that solid, respectful affection, which well-grounded esteem has molded into confident friendship. And when I talk of ill usage, I don't mean that savage deportment, with which the brutal part of people behave towards one another; blows and abusive brawls are practised only among porters, and such as are, or ought to be placed upon a level with them; but gentlemen know, that such kind of behaviour is enough not only to degrade nobility, but even to unman a rational creature. No provocation so grievous can justify a man's lifting his hand against a woman; in this the very brutes are an example to us, who, however bitten, torn, or exasperated by a female of their species, never turn upon her; no instance of this kind can be produced in any other brute than that worst of brutes, a human one. There is something so extremely low and base in tyrannizing over a creature, the delicacy of whose frame renders her incapable of self-defence, that nothing but the most heartless
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coward can be capable of attempting it. This is so true, that it is generally observable, that your greatest heroes at beating the women in their power, are such down-looking dastards as never dare eye a man steadily in the face: Nay it is my opinion that the wretch who dares strike a woman, would not scruple to cut a man's throat in his sleep, might he do it with impunity. But these are a kind of monsters in nature, whose miserable manners are below our notice! There are other ways of being guilty of ill usage: Between man and wife every action or omission which obstructs or deviates from that intimacy of soul, of which the union of bodies is but a pledge, is ill treatment.

But will you make no allowance, sir, says the Gentleman, for disagreeable qualities in a woman, which may render such an intimacy impossible? I can make no allowances on one side, sir, says *Lactifer*, but what, I am apt to think, are over-ballanced on the other.

In the first place I must observe, that the disagreeable qualities which may be found in some women are, generally speaking, owing to the same cause as those in men; the want of a proper education. And in this particular the women are generally more to be pitied than men, as they are the most susceptible of, and the most seldom done justice in a good education. Instead of any care being taken to make them what they are, by nature, capable of being, the greatest industry is made use of, thro' the folly and ignorance of their parents themselves, to vitiate their minds, to corrupt their hearts, and to leave them unprovided with any of the means

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means necessary to guard themselves from the innumerable dangers of ruin, they are perpetually exposed to. But this you will say does not render their real faults less disagreeable to a man, who is every day subject to the ill consequences of them. True; but the excuse these faults carry with them is sufficient to hinder every reflecting man from thinking their persons less agreeable; when he must be sensible, that, if his wife, for want of education, has some failings to exercise his patience with, he, with all his education, has a no less number of failings to try hers.

Besides, let it be consider'd, Gentlemen, adds *Lactifer*, we call the women the weaker vessels, not so much on account of the delicacy of frame, which renders them more feeble in body than we are, as on account of that imbecillity of mind and heart, by which we conceit them less capable than ourselves of bearing up against difficulties and dangers. And yet we expect them to bear all the greatest, and sometimes most insupportable hardships which our folly, vice, and misconduct subject them to; and to bear them without grudge or shew of discontent: while we ourselves are too weak to bear with their most trifling failings. We acknowledge them to be subject to an infinity of greater dangers and temptations than we are, to be weaker than we are; and yet every slip of theirs is a heinous, pardonable crime: while we ourselves, less tempted and more vigorous, do not blush to commit the basest infidelities to them. Where is the man, ever so happy in a wife, whose constancy would be proof against the first invitation of a
beautiful

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beautiful woman he liked? And yet there is, I believe, no woman, well used by her husband, whom a first solicitation of ever so agreeable a man could subdue. How many repeated solicitations does not the frailest of women resist before she surrenders? How few men stand in need of any solicitations to be unfaithful? Where then is this boasted strength of ours? If the women are expected to do more, to bear more, and to resist more; why do we call them the weaker vessels? Or, if they are the weaker, is it not our office, who compliment ourselves with this superior strength, to exert it in their behalf, by supporting them when drooping, raising them when fallen, and winking at those frailties, which we know to be more the misfortune of their constitutions than the fault of their wills? Where then is the justice in oppressing them? If our superior strength gives the power, equity denies us the right; which if we could with any shew of reason claim, the least degree of generosity must restrain us from exercising. No man is intitled to make a woman wretched; she is to obey him, it is true, but in quality of a help-mate, not of a slave or a servant. She is design'd him by heaven as a comfort, and it is in his power to make her such; by cherishing her if good, and by soothing her into goodness, if bad, by advice and example. He is appointed her guardian, to instruct her in good, and guard her from evils; but he is neither given her for a tyrant nor a task-master: whatever disagreeable qualities then a wife may have, they can never give a husband a title to abuse her.

Secondly,

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Secondly, let me ask, whether these disagreeable qualities in a woman were, or were not, in her before marriage? If they were; then why did the man, who saw them in her, make choice of her for a wife? Either he saw something lovely in her, which out-weigh'd all her bad qualities; and in that case, why does he not still, as he ought to do, look upon her in the same light after marriage as before? And why not make the same allowances? Or else he imagin'd he might rectify in her what he disliked, by good usage; and by rendering himself amiable to her, might mold her into a proper object of his love: Why then does he not persist in attempting what nothing but constancy and assiduity can effect?

But supposing he discover'd her imperfections only after marriage (which can seldom be the case, but in those hasty matches which are more the offspring of lust or interest, than the well-weigh'd effects of deliberate reason) did he not marry her *for better, for worse*? Did he not promise to take, keep, love, and cherish her with all her imperfections? Or was he besotted enough to imagin she had none? Does he not expect, in virtue of the marriage vow, that his wife shall love him, be faithful to, and careful of him, notwithstanding all his faults? In justice therefore, he owes the same condescension to her, notwithstanding hers.

But how often is it the case, sir, says the gentleman, that the faults are all on the woman's side? Never, says *Lactifer*; no man is so perfect

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fect as not to have some failings, and considerable ones too, to be borne with. We may even say, speaking in general, that the best men are generally surrounded with the most oddities; and it seldom happens, if we examine impartially, that they are not greater by many degrees both in number and quality on the man's, than on the woman's side. Nay, I may go farther; the greatest failings in the generality of women, fall very short of the least considerable vices of their husbands. Their faults are rather foibles than crimes, and, for the most part, owing to the ill example or exasperating conduct of the man, whose duty obliged him, and whose authority enabled him to prevent their frailties, by kindness and prudence. For I cannot help thinking that the worst of misconduct in married women is ever the consequence of want of sense, virtue, or good nature in the men they are married to.

It must be allow'd that oftentimes when man and wife differ, there are faults on both sides. For there are some bad wives as well as bad husbands, tho' nothing near so many of the former as of the latter; and upon examination it will be found that the badness of the wife is ever originally owing to some degree of badness in the husband. No woman, however bad her natural disposition may be, would either dare or be inclined to wrong or ill use a husband, who did not first forfeit her *love* or her *esteem*, by want of good nature, or want of virtue and discretion. If a man has virtue and good nature, he will be faithful to, and fond of his wife. And his fidelity and fondness cannot but create
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in her a mutual affection for him in her turn, and a desire of pleasing him. Then if he has sense, he will temper that fondness with such a degree of manly deportment as must, by convincing her that his good nature is not the effect of softness but sense, add to her affection an awful esteem and a fear of offending him. All the misbehaviour of wives to their husbands is owing to the want of these two principles, which alone can make a man truly happy in a wife, and which few, very few husbands take the pains to instil into the women they accuse of wanting them.

What you say, sir, says the Gentleman, seems very just in theory, but, I am afraid, is not always reducible to practice. There are some women so perverse, that no usage, good or bad, can render them agreeable. How far that be true or not, says *Lactifer*, I will not take upon me to say; ill treatment I am sure can never make a good wife of a bad one; and therefore can never be justifiable to the worst of women. Even good usage may sometimes lose its effect, though, I am pretty confident, whenever it does it is for want of constancy in the application. The marble, which one, two, or two thousand drops of water will not have any effect on, will and must give way to the incessant drippings of it; and the worst of tempers must and will yield at length to unwearied good usage.

In truth, *Lactifer*, says another Gentleman, you would make an excellent apostle to preach patience to hen-peck'd husbands; yet I fancy you would rather renounce matrimony than en-
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gage in it with a shrew. I commend every man, says *Lactifer*, who uses all his endeavours to succeed in the happy choice of a wife, or declines marrying till he finds one, who, according to his most prudential conjectures, is likely to make him a good one. For my own part, I am at present in no hurry to alter my condition, and therefore I am resolved to make use of all the precaution I am master of, to secure happiness to myself and the wife I shall chuse, when I do alter it; which, however, I never shall do till I meet with a woman whom my reason directs my heart to love. What a woman must that be! says the Gentleman, a perfect one I dare say: but where will you meet with one, sir? Ah! believe me, you will never be married if you wait till reason points her out.

What I have already said, sir, says *Lactifer*, might have spared you this reflection. There is no human creature thoroughly perfect. To expect a woman without any faults is one of the greatest follies, and this folly is a *Fourth* source of misery in a marriage state, and not less fatal and frequent, perhaps, than the rest. Coxcombs may fancy their mistresses angels, seraphims, goddesses; but men of sense know the most accomplish'd of the sex are still women, and consequently liable to all the frailties incident to human nature. A man therefore, who considers his mistress above all blemishes, and thinks of nothing but marrying a goddess, or at least an angel, must be disappointed: the fatal consequences of which disappointment we daily see. For nothing is more common than to see those weak
mortals

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mortals, who treat their mistresses like goddesses, make devils of their wives.

The most compleat women then have their imperfections as well as men; and for my own part I should require some imperfections in the woman I made choice of for a wife; for if it was possible to find a woman free from every imperfection, I could never have the courage to marry her; as the want of all faults in her would be a perpetual, stinging reproach to the many failings which every man of sense must be conscious of in himself. If my wife had no faults to be borne with by me, how could I reasonably desire her to bear with the many found in me? No; the infinite superiority of merit I must acknowledge in her, would be too upbraiding a disproportion: and therefore I should rather chuse a wife whose many frailties, by their near proportion to my own, might keep me a little in countenance.

Tho' I must own, I should still endeavour to pitch upon a wife with as few as possible. But if, after all my precautions, I should be disappointed, I should still think myself obliged to submit to the disposition of providence, and study to fullfil my marriage vow in the best manner I was capable. I should remember that, when I took her *for better, for worse*, I promised to love and cherish her, whichever she might prove; and therefore if she proved *worse* than I expected she would be; I would never give over my love and good usage to her, till I made her even *better* than I hoped she could be. These, sir, are my sentiments, and what, I believe,

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lieve, every man of sense and honesty would subscribe to, if he did not suffer passion, prejudice, and indolence, to get the ascendant over reason and conscience.

You are certainly right, *Lactifer*, says the Baron, and I think myself infinitely obliged to you for your ingenuous sincerity. You have awaken'd me from a lethargy, which had liked to cost me the happiness of my whole life, and into which I was as much flatter'd by the false reasonings of others, as lull'd by my own folly and indolence. It is but too often the case, sir, says *Lactifer*, one bad husband is capable of corrupting a thousand good ones; and there are more women render'd wretched in marriage by the bad company their husbands keep, than by their own bad conduct, or the ill disposition of their husbands themselves. If a man is weak enough to be jealous of his wife; his jealousies are fomented, by the ill discourses of a miscreant as weak as himself, or by some fawning sycophant who preys upon his credulity to perpetrate his own knavish purposes. If he is not jealous; he is made so, by the base insinuations of such as envy his happiness, and propose to themselves some advantage from his disquiets. If he is respectful to his wife; he is hen-peck'd: if he loves her; he doats: and if sober and careful of his family; he is sneer'd into debauchery and extravagance. Of so ill consequence to the peace and prosperity of married people is the bad choice of their company.

What you say, sir, is but too true, says the Baron; and I am but too fatal an instance of it.

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it. However, I begin once more to see clear; and, if it be not too late, shall endeavour to repair the mistakes I have been guilty of. To you I owe all the thanks for this return of reason. You, I remember, was witness to our former loves; and you, I hope, will assist me in the renewal of them. Your friendly offices, I am confident, will be of service with my wife, whose affection, I am sensible, I have either forfeited or justly deserved to forfeit, and therefore cannot do too much to regain. I am not ashamed to own it; and I make no doubt but that generosity, which gave birth in you to those noble sentiments I owe my reformation to, will be sufficient to prevail with you to befriend me on this occasion.

Lactifer was going to make answer, when the ladies join'd the company. The Baron, who was in earnest, began, without procrastination, to put his resolution in practice; and behaved to his lady in a very different manner from what he had done for some time before. And *Lactifer* had the satisfaction to see the good effects of this change. The lady, without knowing the cause of this sudden alteration in the Baron her husband, shew'd such dispositions towards a perfect re-union as were sufficient to demonstrate, that it was not owing to her, that they had not always been as completely happy as marriage is capable of making those it cements. The rest of the evening pass'd in unallay'd cheerfulness; and the company did not separate 'till midnight. *Lactifer* was the last who went away, being detain'd by the Baron to be a

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witness

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witness to his reconciliation with his lady, which was extremely affecting on both sides. After this, and some compliments of congratulation and thanks, he took his leave, but not without answering their repeated intreaties with reiterated assurances that he would give them his company as often as possible while he remained at the *Hague*.

Lactifer went home, in an extreme impatience to see his friend the Knight, and to give him an account of his conversation with the Baron and his companions. The next day therefore he was very early at the walks, where, after having repeated the circumstances of the Baron's disagreement and reconciliation with his lady, to the Knight, he began to inveigh very warmly against the senseless reasonings of the company. His indignation was raised, and he said to him, in a kind of passionate tone, what think you, sir, do not such wretches deserve our utmost hatred? No, sir, says the Knight; we must still love them, hatred is never justifiable. But, sir, says *Lactifer*, how will you do to love what is not amiable? There is always something, says the Knight, even in the most disorderly men, which merits our love, and it is by that very consideration we are to examine into them. They are all men, form'd by the hand of God, and susceptible of his grace; what more need they, to merit our affection? Hatred generally arises from the judgment we form of those we hate, which judgment we must allow to be always unjust, if we could but divest ourselves of partiality.

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A person attacks our self-love so far as to wound it, very often without the least design to do it; a word, a look, an innocent motion gives us room to suspect that he despises us; and that is more than enough to make him the object of our hatred; because we judge him to be haughty, proud, and backbiting; whereas did we but know how far he is from every one of these vices, we should cease to hate him for want of the motives which induced us to it. Hatred then springs from the judgment we form of the persons we hate.

There is a great deal of difference, sir, says *Lactifer*, between the case you mention, and mine. So far from being able to find any innocence in the men I conversed with last night, I could find nothing in them but vice, folly, and excessive ignorance. That seems true, sir, says the Knight, from the account you have given me of their sentiments; however if you conclude thence that you ought to hate them, your judgment is false; because you ought to hate only the vices you discover in them, and not their persons. This appears to me, sir, says *Lactifer*, a very metaphysical distinction. May be so, sir, says the Knight, and therefore it is the more true for being abstracted from all those circumstances which are too apt, by clogging the imagination, to deceive the understanding.

Let us consider hatred in it's origin and progress, and we shall find nothing in it but injustice and a meanness, beneath the dignity of a rational creature. We love all that is in ourselves,

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and self-love makes us consider our very faults as perfections. We never know how to do ourselves justice, and we are ever sure to judge of others by ourselves; so that if the sentiments of a person we converse with are not conformable to our own, we look down upon him with contempt; and if he persists in supporting his own opinion, if he has more spirit and vivacity than we have, if he has a greater facility and fluency of speech and displays a greater brilliancy of genius, nothing more is required to make us hate him; and yet, perhaps, both sides shall be in the wrong.

I understand you, sir, says *Lactifer*; you would give me to understand that hatred owes it's birth to self-love. Doubtless, sir, says the Knight; nay, if I should even tell you that hatred itself is often a kind of love carried to an excess, what would you say? I shall scarce be so ready, sir, replies *Lactifer*, to contradict your assertion, at present, as I was when we were talking the other day of anger. I have learn'd to mistrust my own prejudices, and to apprehend the strength of your arguments. Well, sir, says the Knight, what I have advanced is strictly true; and you yourself cannot but know that injured love often turns to hatred. The same principle holds good still; a woman who loves a man, and thinks herself worth being requited with reciprocal love, will, as soon as she perceives her love slighted, convert that love into hatred. It is not so much that she therefore ceases to love him; her love but changes shape, and differs in it's effects.

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What a paradox! says *Lactifer*. A paradox, if you please, let it be, sir, says the Knight; but it is not the less true for appearing such; and the most celebrated authors, as well ancient as modern, have been so convinced that these different emotions of love are natural to the corruption of man, that they have made a very happy use of them in their works whenever occasion has offer'd. It can be no new thing to you, how excessive a love *Dido* bore to *Æneas*. And yet when her lover was preparing to leave her, these are the words which *Virgil* puts in her mouth. *Æneis*, B. IV.

*Thou goddess-born? Thou of Dardanian race?
 Traitor! thou ly'st: thy origin is base;
 Grim Caucasus begat thee on a rock,
 And some Hyrcanian tygress gave the suck.*

*I scorn, by force, to stop thy coward flight;
 Or to refute thy fictions, tho' I might.
 Go, sail for Latium, catch the fleeting breeze,
 And seek new realms a-cross uncertain seas.
 But if the Gods can just demands allow,
 Some fatal shelf shall pay thy broken vow.
 Then shalt thou call, oft call on Dido's name;
 Then absent Dido, in a sulph'ry flame,
 Shall send her ghost, thy guilty soul to fright;
 And haunt thee ev'ry where, by day and night.
 Then her unbod'd spirit, mix'd with wind,
 To punish thee, O wretch, new ways shall find;
 Her very shade shall triumph o'er thy woe,
 Which fame shall trumpet thro' the realms below.*

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Thus speaks a lover, who thinks herself injured; and such are the terms in which she expresses her love. For, notwithstanding all the hatred exprest in this speech, she still loves her dear *Æneas*, and her very hatred itself is love. She considers the fatal moment approaching, of that separation which will cost her dear; she eyes the instant which is to rob her of the object of her love; and her distress, which love makes her so sensible to, makes her talk in a very different manner from what she would, if love permitted her to feel less the departure of *Æneas*. Recollect but what she says soon after, and there will need no other proof of her still loving him. 'Tis to her sister she is speaking, when she says thus. *Ibid.*

*Haste, sister, haste, the haughty foe implore;
Say, I, at Aulis, ne'er with Grecians swore
The Ilian name and people to destroy,
Nor sent one fleet against the friends of Troy;
Nor did I move his father's sacred dust:
Why is he deaf then to a suit so just?
From me thus rashly whither does he fly?
Can he my wretched love's last boon deny?
Let him at least his ill-tim'd flight delay,
'Till prosp'rous gales mark out his liquid way.*

Don't you call this love? sir; and can you conceive it an easy matter to pass thus instantly from love to hatred, and from hatred to love, without agreeing that these two passions, however different they may appear, are really but one and the same thing in their principle.

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The truth of your reasoning, sir, says *Lactifer*, appears so much the more evident to me, as I have myself known an instance of it in fact. Doubtless you must have heard talk of lady *****, that famous gamestress, whom cards have render'd as celebrated in most parts of *Europe*, as in *England*. I have but a very imperfect idea of her, sir, says the Knight, and therefore you will oblige me by giving me a history of her.

This lady, sir, says *Lactifer*, was of an illustrious family, born to a considerable fortune, and by nature enrich'd with qualities capable of making her an ornament to her sex, had her education been suited to her birth and ability. She had beauty, good nature, and a lively genius, susceptible of the best impressions; but she was no sooner capable of receiving any, than bad ones were forced upon her. Dress, toys, dolls, and trifles were the first things she was taught to like. She knew nothing so soon as that she was handsome; and every man her little ladyship saw, was to address her in quality of a future husband, before she well knew what the word meant. If she was to be mortified, her husband was to be a poor man, or at best a simple gentleman; but when it was thought proper to please or flatter her, she was to be married to a Lord or a Duke; her husband was to deck her with jewels, and to keep her a coach and six. What wonder then that a young creature, thus educated from her infancy in principles of luxury and extravagance, should place all felicity in them? In fact, when she grew up, these principles were too strongly imprest on her mind

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to be easily effaced. As she was both beautiful and rich she was never without abundance of suitors; but tho' the number of admirers flatter'd her vanity, she sovereignly despised all such as had not a title and a great estate. But she soon felt the fatal effects of the false principles she had imbibed.

A young nobleman, next heir to a very great title and as great an estate, made his addresses to her; and these pretensions join'd to a very comely person and insinuating behaviour soon drew her affections so strongly to him, that she at length consented to marry him. And tho' his birth and riches were at first the chief considerations which induced her to listen to him; she grew, after some time, distractedly fond of his person. The young nobleman her suitor was not the same way affected towards her. Her fortune was what charm'd him, and tho' he could not dislike her person, yet the many follies which a prejudiced education had made a second nature to her, set her beauty and other charms in so disagreeable a light, that he could not help conceiving a very great distaste to her. However the consideration of interest help'd him to counterfeit so successfully, that the young lady made no doubt of his corresponding with her love, in a manner equally ardent.

They were married then; and you will not be surpris'd, sir, says *Lactifer*, to the Knight, if I tell you, that the lady had soon after reason to repent of her credulity. Her husband found it necessary to put a restraint upon her profusion: And in this he would not have been

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to blame, had he done it in an engaging manner. But as he had no love for her he could not resolve to use even the common methods of complaisance in doing it. On the contrary he behaved in every thing after such a manner as left her no room to question that he had a sovereign contempt and hatred for her. A treatment she so little expected, and so opposite to that which she had been ever accustomed to flatter herself with the hopes of, threw her into the utmost despair. She was too well acquainted with her own beauty to be able to think it worthy contempt. And the tenderness of her affection for him made his hatred the more insupportable to her. However there was no remedy for her evils; married she was, and nothing could release her from his tyrannical behaviour but death. Hard reflections these for a young creature, who had no assistance of superior sentiments to comfort her amidst them. What could she do to dissipate the racking melancholy, which such a disappointment must bring with it? She had no relish for books. She had never been taught to look into them, and therefore was a stranger to the comforts they are capable of dispensing. Working at her needle, would have been but a more laboriously splenetic kind of amusement, had she known it: But she had always been inform'd that a lady's hands are only made to be kiss'd, and that it is prophaning them to employ them in any other office than that of feeding themselves, or setting a curl right, when the impertinent wind has puff'd it out

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of place. The only means of comfort left her then was to apply to Quadrille: and tho', at first, melancholy made this dissipation a burden to her; necessity brought her to like it, and custom at length made her love it to the most extravagant excess.

For several years, her husband allow'd her a certain sum of money for her private expenses, which he could not in decency refuse her, considering the great fortune she had brought him. He knew what a disgrace it would bring upon him to refuse her that, and That he knew, he might afford her without missing it. He did not therefore concern himself about her play, as on one side it free'd him from her company, which he so much disliked; and on the other, he imagin'd, it could not be any ways material to him whether she lost or won. However he was grossly mistaken, for she took up frequently considerable sums, and always lost them. One day a person came to him to demand payment of a note sign'd by his lady of five thousand pounds, which could not but greatly astonish him. He pay'd the money however, but resolved to put a stop for the future to her play; which he did by stopping her former allowances. Her ladyship express'd her displeasure at the treatment, and demanded his reason for this proceeding: which he as frankly told her in such terms as were not the most engaging.

From this time the lady, who was already pretty much wean'd from her affection to her husband, and who now found herself made
extremely

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It was thus, sir, says *Lactifer*, that hatred made her look upon her husband; who had indeed given himself up very much to debauchery, but wanted still nothing of the graces of youth. He was handsome, comely, and vigorous, and deficient in nothing but the care of pleasing his wife.

Our gentleman was neither so young, nor so well made; but was more officious to oblige her and therefore more agreeable. He omitted no one advantage he could take from her ladyship's words. You have a right to complain, madam, said he; but you are not to wonder that a youth so enervated as your husband, should be insensible to your youth and charms. It is therefore, fair lady, that I wish you a husband, such as may know how to discern your uncommon merit, and pay you with a thousand little condescendences all the love and respect which you deserve.

Ah, says the lady sighing, your unavailing wishes serve but to augment my despair, when I reflect on the impossibility of seeing them accomplish'd. What, madam, replies the gentleman is there no man so happy as to be able to please you? Can you doubt of the power nature has given you over hearts? It is in vain to flatter me, says she, I am no *Armida*, to have the gift of enchanting. In short, sir, let us drop, if you please, a discourse which can only enhance my wretchedness; had I all the graces nature could enrich me with, of what service could they be to me? I am married; is not that saying all? True, madam, says the

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the gentleman; but if I should take my revenge, where would your husband then be? At these words, the lady look'd at him with an air of surprise and timidity; and lowering her eyes, remain'd for some time interdicted.

She broke silence however after a while, to ask him if there was no other way to revenge her than by the death of her husband. You love him then still, madam, says the gentleman, after all the ill treatment you have received from him? How can you conceive it possible, says she, for me to love, any longer, a man who has so basely requited my love? But still he is my husband; and I frankly confess to you, that duty pleads for him against the implacable hatred I feel to him. Madam, says the gentleman, what a weakness is yours! Will you then degenerate from the noble blood you received from your ancestors? What will you have the world say of you? It will pity me, perhaps, says she. Very likely, madam, says the gentleman; but will this barren, unactive pity deliver you from the hands of a barbarous tyrant, who has so many ways merited your aversion?

Alas! sir, says her ladyship, how you perplex me! If that be the case, madam, says he, I must withdraw: I see plainly you have alter'd your mind; and I am very sorry for my indiscretion in saying so much to you: Farewel, madam; expect not to see me ever any more: It will be in vain to send for me: I bid you for ever adieu. For heaven's sake, sir, said she, don't abandon me; I protest, to you my mind is not changed; I only apprehended that you mean'd

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mean'd I should give myself up the price of the vengeance you are so generous to offer to assist me in? Madam, says the gentleman, I am not so very vain as to be incapable of doing myself justice; I know I am not possess'd of those endowments requisite to merit the happiness of pleasing your ladyship; yet, if the most tender love, the most passionate zeal, and the profoundest esteem which can possess a human breast, can have any weight with you, I may not entirely despair of becoming, one day, the happiest of men.

The lofty lady knew not well how to brook such a discourse from a gentleman so much beneath her. However dissemble she must, not to exasperate a man she had so much need of, and whom she had trusted with her secret. In fact, she did so; telling him, that he might be assured, she would not be ungrateful to him for the service he proffer'd to do her: she afterwards gave him her hand, which he kiss'd with a kind of religious respect.

He thought now no more on any thing but the means of ridding his charmer of her hated husband, in such a manner as might leave no room for suspicion. He did not much like the expedient of fighting him; inasmuch as, whether conqueror or conquered, he should be equally removed from the main purpose of his undertaking. For the lady could never have married the murderer of her husband, should he make interest to get his pardon; because such a proceeding would be too glaring a proof of their perfidy. Poison seem'd a safer means;
and

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and yet, as it is ever attended with betraying symptoms, should the crime be detected, nothing could have saved his beloved idol nor himself. At length therefore, he resolved on a party at shooting, and to kill her husband on that occasion.

The gentleman proposed it to him, and he very readily acquiesced to it. He did not love his lady enough to be jealous of her gallant upon her score, and therefore was not enough upon his guard to suspect any treachery. The next morning then they set out in company of some other gentlemen, who were invited of the party. The husband had not been in the woods an hour, enjoying the pleasure of the sport, when he fell on the ground with a shot he received in his breast. All the company were in the utmost consternation at the accident, as they thought it, except our gentleman, who knew better. He counterfeited, however, as great a surprise as the rest. They all left their sport, flock'd to him; and, as he was past all relief, they were not so much busied to give him any as to consider how to acquaint her ladyship with the accident; which they thought must go near to cost her her life too. But the good lady was not very fond of dying so soon.

However, as soon as the news was brought her, whether remorse or some remains of tenderness might be the cause, she burst out into such a flood of tears, and took on in so natural a manner, that no one could have the least room to guess how little a surprise it was upon her. Every one about her used their utmost endeavours to mitigate her grief which they
conceived

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conceived to be in a much greater excess than it really was.

To be short, the comic mourning ended, and experience shew'd that she was not altogether so inconsolable as the matron of *Ephesus*. However it was now time for her to look about her, what measures to take with her gentleman. She was under no positive engagements to him, but he, nevertheless, thought, he had a right to claim all.

One day, as they were together and walking by themselves, he address'd himself thus to her: May I, madam, without offence, put you in mind of what my love has induced me to do for your sake, and of the return you was so gracious to promise me? The time of your mourning is now at an end; may I hope that the period of my felicity is drawing near?

I very well remember, sir, answer'd she, what you have done for me; and I have not forgotten the gratitude I promised you. I assure you then, I retain the most grateful sense of it; and to give you a convincing proof of what I say, tell me, sir, what service can I render you? What do I hear, madam? said the gentleman; is that all you promised me. I promised you nothing, sir, answer'd she, but acknowledgments; and therefore require nothing more of me: I understand very well, sir, what you aim at; but what you ask me cannot be the effect of simple acknowledgments or gratitude, but of love, which I never did promise you.

What, madam, says the Gentleman, am I then to fall a victim to the tenderness of my love?

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love? But for that, I had still been innocent of the blood I have so lately shed; and these hands, which are still reeking with it, reproach me with my baseness and your ingratitude. Who would have imagin'd that the crime, which love made me guilty of, should be so ill requited? Are you not afraid, lest hatred should take possession of my heart and urge me to proclaim, to the wide world, your shame and my own, in the base action you induced me to commit? What will then become of you? Think seriously on it: An exasperated lover is no contemptible enemy. He pronounced the last words with a very menacing air; and left the Lady to dwell upon them, without waiting a reply.

She remain'd sometime in the garden, to consult within herself the most prudential methods she had to take in an emergency which appear'd to be of the utmost delicacy. To add to her difficulty, the affair was of such a nature that she could not disclose it; since to ask advice, was running the risk of ruin. She foresaw, that, if her gallant's love should once turn to hatred, she must be lost beyond all resource; for she had no reason to doubt but hatred would urge him to as great an extremity against her, as it had against her husband. On the the other side she was so well convinced of her suitor's love, that she did not question but one look from her would be capable of appeasing him. Still, says she to herself, if I do see him; I cannot long deceive him by a feign'd tenderness, while I refuse him the proofs of it he requires; and then I shall have all to fear. What must be done then?

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then? He had the courage to rid me of my husband; and why should I want the courage to rid myself of him?

While she was making these reflections, her suitor, retired to his closet, was making others not very advantageous to her; but with this difference, that, her heart being more at liberty than his, her mind was less perplexed and more free to resolve on the utmost extremities: However, this was the last resolution he came to; to go to her once more, and try to touch her with a reciprocal tenderness for him; and, in case she should refuse to listen favourably to him, to effect her ruin and his own together. But he had not time to put his design in execution.

She concluded he would come once more to her at least, before he put any thing desperate in practice, and she was prepared for his coming. Accordingly he came, and, throwing himself on his knees to her, implored her not be inflexible to his passion. After some pretended reluctance, she feign'd to acquiesce to his suit; and at last went so far as to fix the period of his happiness: All which she carry'd on with so much natural ease, that he really believed her as much in earnest as he was, and was transported with excess of joy. Before he went away, she made him a present of a very rich snuff-box, as a pledge of her affection, which he accepted with extraordinary marks of acknowledgment. But the first time he took snuff out of it, he pay'd down for it the price of life. He fell into a sudden delirium, out of which he never return'd.

It was thus that Lady ***** ridded herself
of

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of a bad husband and a troublesome gallant. Such excesses did this unhappy creature run into, thro' the criminal neglect of her parents, in omitting to instil into her early youth the virtuous maxims she was, by nature, susceptible of! To such untimely ends did her husband and gallant hurry themselves; the one by his unjust and indiscreet usage of his wife, the other by basely forwarding the disquiets of both! And to so criminal extremities, will want of education reduce the women in the world the most capable of being made both good and wise. A plain proof of the truth of that homely proverb; *The corruption of the best is ever the worst.*

However her ladyship lived not long in the enjoyment of her crimes; she died some few years afterwards, reduced to the last extremity of want, having play'd away the very bed under her; which she was indulged the use of, out of mere compassion.

I have heard talk of this lady before, says the Knight, but never heard mention'd the particulars you have now related to me; which I think would be sufficient, if known, to deter all her sex from giving way to the itch of play. And yet, says *Lactifer*, how many melancholly consequences is not the passion of gaming and every other passion daily subject to, which however are not sufficient to restrain those who are witnesses to them! What you say, sir, is very true, says the Knight. And I take this to be owing to that general inconsideracy which suffers us not to make an application of other men's

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men's cases to ourselves. Why does a man, who condemns drunkenness in another, on account of the deformity he discovers in his behaviour and the fatal miseries which he sees himself exposed to, give a loose to the same unnatural vice? Let us but recur to our principles, and we shall find, that it is for want of the application we are speaking of. Self-love blinds him, and he vainly flatters himself, that drunkenness, in him, is not attended with so much deformity as in others, nor liable to the same ill consequences.

We see ourselves in too near a light to be judges of our own actions; and we consider others in too distant a one to know them rightly. But can reason direct us to do so? sir, says *Lactifer*; no, says the Knight; were we to consult reason, we should place ourselves and all mankind upon the same level. Reason dictates to us, to do to others just as much as, and no more than, we would wish to have done to ourselves. But self-love, not able of itself to withstand this innate principle, makes us consider it under such restrictions at least as insensibly tend to overthrow it. In like manner reason tells us, to love only what is lovely in itself; but self-love is apt to represent to us, whatever our passions covet, as lovely. Hence, whatever strikes the senses agreeably is sure of gaining us over to it, however opposite it be in itself to what is really lovely; whereas had we reason in view, we should find, that there is nothing more unworthy our pursuits. Thus it appears, from all we have hitherto said, how liable to error

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ror every man is, who listens to his passions; and how inconsistent every rational being appears, who does not, by constant recourse to the unprejudiced dictates of right reason, keep those passions in a perpetual subjection to it. Since, by so doing, he would render the passions subservient to the wise design for which providence gave them to us; whereas for want of this our very reason, perverted, is made a prostitute means of our destruction.

Melancholy experience, sir, says *Lactifer*, makes your remark but too just. And I am so sensible of it, that it is no small concern to me to think of being obliged to quit the *Hague* so soon; before I have the time to reap the benefit of our past conversations, by applying to myself, with your assistance, the remarks we have hitherto made, on the ill use which most men make of those passions, heaven gave as so many instruments to encrease merit. But some important affairs call me away; and nothing can excuse my setting out for *London*, in the ship that sails to morrow. The Knight express'd his concern at so sudden a parting; and after some very friendly compliments which pass'd between them, *Lactifer* and the Knight took leave of each other, having first mutually engaged to keep up their correspondence by letter.

F I N I S.

